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SKETCHES  
OF  
ELOQUENT PREACHERS.

BY REV. J. B. WATERBURY, D. D.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ."



PUBLISHED BY THE  
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,  
150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW YORK.

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# SKETCHES

OF

## ELOQUENT PREACHERS.

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DR. JOHN M. MASON.

TAKEN altogether, no American preacher has combined more impressive qualities. His aspect was on a scale of grandeur corresponding to the majesty of mind within. We always feel a sort of pleasing approbation where the symmetry of form and features tallies with a dignified interior. It was emphatically so in the case of Dr. Mason. Tall, robust, straight, with a head modelled after neither Grecian nor Roman standard, yet symmetrical, combining the dignity of the one and the grace of the other; with an eye that shot fire, especially when under the excitement of earnest preaching, yet tender and tearful when the pathetic chord was touched; with a forehead broad and high, running up each side, and slightly parted

in the middle by a graceful pendant of hair; a mouth and chin expressive of firmness and decision, Dr. Mason stood before you the prince of pulpit orators. His voice, for compass and flexibility, was scarcely exceeded, one would think, by that of the renowned Demosthenes. It would fill, without effort, the largest building. Its lower utterances were musical, possessing the qualities of a rich baritone. His ordinary or conversational tone was so clear and distinct, that every word reached the most distant hearer; and when he rose under the excitement of discourse to the loftier notes, his voice rang through the building like the clangor of a trumpet.

Over the whole man there was an air of sacred heroism. He would have commanded an army, and led them himself into the deadly breach. He would have confronted the material universe in a good cause, and maintained his position in face of the fiercest opposition. Had he been a senator or barrister, how would the thunders of his eloquence have awed every hearer, and given him the palm of secular oratory, as by universal consent he bore away that of the pulpit.

Many were the advantages which this dis-



tinguished minister enjoyed, all tending to that perfection of mind and manner which gave him so marked a priority among his contemporaries. The son of an eminent clergyman, he was trained most assiduously by parental care and counsel. He was sent to complete his studies to the highest schools of sacred learning in Edinburgh. He had the talent and the determination to make the most of these advantages. His mind became liberalized, as well as stored with varied learning; so that when he began his career in New York, it was not a slow growth, but an astounding perfection. It was like Minerva springing from the head of Jupiter, all armed for the contest.

He created a sensation at the very first, and was chosen by acclamation to be the successor of his father. The church being too small to accommodate those who wished to hear him, another of ampler dimensions was erected. What crowds hung upon his lips, as meanwhile by courtesy he occupied the Cedar-street Presbyterian church. When the Murray-street edifice was completed, the imperial preacher took the pulpit, and dedicated the house to God and to His truth. The pulpit or rostrum was a novelty. It was a stage, with

an elevated cushion in front; and it inaugurated a new style, since generally copied. The old tub pulpit would never have done for Dr. Mason. Thanks to him that for the most part it is now numbered with the things that were. It is said that the doctor, upon being rallied on preaching from a stage, replied, "Why should the devil have all the best advantages for public speaking?"

But he made a mistake in the location of his stage pulpit, which proved detrimental to his new enterprise. He placed it between the doors. Hence everybody who entered was exposed to the gaze of the whole congregation. This was more than a modest man could endure, to say nothing of the more sensitive sex. It brought also all the nearest and most eligible seats into requisition first, and who could thread his way up under a thousand eyes to the back tier? The rear pews, even under the attraction of Dr. Mason's oratory, were scarcely ever all filled. By this arrangement also he was exposed to the noise of those coming in late, slamming the doors, and striding up the aisles with heavy tread. This would sometimes occur after the service had commenced, and occasionally even during the in-

troduction of the sermon. The doctor was greatly annoyed by these interruptions. We remember a terrible rebuke administered by him to a pert young dandy, who had more brass on his heels than sense in his head. This self-complacent young man threw open the door with an air, and then strutted along directly in front of the pulpit, taking the direction of the middle aisle. The preacher was just in his introduction. He paused. He fixed his keen eye on the obtruder, the congregation meanwhile silent as death, and pitying the victim, whose brass heels were the only sound heard as he sought refuge in the distant pew. Turning, he faced the preacher, when, with a peculiar expression, the doctor made him a low bow, and proceeded with his discourse. If he had shot an arrow at the youngster, he could not have made him feel worse. At the close of the exercises he requested the audience to be seated. They knew something was coming. He began upon the brazen heels, more becoming horses or asses than men, and the impudent interruptions which they caused. He told them they must not come with their horse-shoe appendages, clattering up the aisles on the naked floor; adding in a low but em-

phatic tone, "More shame that they *are* naked." Carpeted aisles had not then come into fashion. Perhaps the doctor's gentle hint hastened their introduction. Poor young man! he was made the text of a terrible peroration. We thought he would not soon forget the application.

The mistake of pulpit between the doors was however made, and some churches were inconsiderate enough to follow the fashion; but all had ultimately to remodel. If the devil was spited by the adoption of the stage pulpit, he took his revenge in putting it where it could do the least harm to his kingdom.

Dr. Mason was great in familiar exposition. He devoted half the Sabbath service to this method. He expounded the Scriptures as no man of that day could. He was learned, devout, intensely earnest, with mingled touches of pathos and caustic satire that kept the mind on a stretch, and made one feel that of all the books in the world there was none that approached the Bible, in its knowledge of men as well as of God. His congregation was a great Bible-class; and he, their teacher, led them through the green fields of spiritual pasturage, cropping at every step the nutritious herbage.



This method gave opportunity for the full play of his great faculties. Reason, imagination, wit, satire, all were by turns brought into requisition. It was a feast to listen to him. Ever and anon, as the occasion offered, he would rise to heights of eloquence almost celestial. His great command of language, his intense emotion, his easy, extemporaneous utterance, made it as delightful as it was instructive to listen to these sacred homilies.

He was great also as an occasional preacher. Charity sermons were his delight. His big soul revelled in the pleas and arguments for a god-like benevolence. Woe to the miser who happened in on such occasions. Woe to the selfish heart that loved to decorate and gratify only itself and its own home circle, while it had no bestowments for the less endowed. His scathing rebukes left no secret apologies unexplored; and men were forced in self-defence to do violence to their selfish nature, and give where they would have gladly withheld.

When this pulpit orator succumbed to the attacks of disease, brought on by labors too abundant, it was like the forest oak struck by a thunderbolt. The outward majesty was still visible; but the vital principle had received a

shock under which the leafy glories were manifestly withering and dying. The glory of man, what is it? "The wind passeth over it, and it is gone. Thou makest our beauty to consume away as a moth. Surely every man is vanity." But this good man was not afraid of evil tidings. His life had been one continued application for the conservation of truth and the upbuilding of Zion. He lived long, judging from the good accomplished; and never was the salutation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," more appropriate.

Dr. Mason was not faultless. He himself would have been the last man to set up such a claim. A deeper penitence, a more self-abasing confession, never was heard than that which flowed from his lips in prayer. Conscious of his sins and infirmities, he was far more ready to upbraid himself than any of his personal enemies could have been to condemn him. His lofty pride of character; his deep loathing of every thing like hypocrisy or sycophancy; his love of country, so intense as to scorn and denounce the mere partisan politician and demagogue, led some to call in question his piety. But they were ignorant of what true piety is. They made no allowances for constitutional dif-

ferences or for human infirmity. “They spake evil of those things which they knew not.” All who know what true piety is, who see its development through varying natural characteristics, are prepared to estimate Dr. Mason’s religion as they would the man’s after God’s own heart, or any other good man’s—carrying their investigation through a life not spotless, not perfect, yet aiming at it; and so judging, by the rule of gospel charity they cannot deny to Dr. Mason the claim of a noble Christian man, as well as a sublime pulpit orator.

## DR. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER.

MY first sight of Dr. Alexander was in 1822, at Princeton. Carrying the usual recommendations for entering the seminary, he received me more in the style of a father than a professor. His smile of welcome I shall never forget. His countenance attracted rather than awed me. I saw goodness rather than greatness—the artlessness of childhood projected into the gravity of years, and a benevolence that won upon me at first sight. Subsequent intercourse more than justified these first favorable impressions.

His personal appearance was neither majestic nor striking. He would have passed perhaps, in a crowd, unnoticed. Below the medium height, of slim proportions, he owed his distinction almost entirely to his mental calibre and high moral qualities. Yet in that countenance dwelt the unmistakable signs of genius and the reflected gleams of a soul in habitual converse with heaven. His forehead was ample, running high over the temples,

marked with lines of thought ; and when the dark iron-gray hair was combed aside, allowing the full expanse to be seen, there was something in it that riveted one's attention. But the speaking features were the eye and the mouth. The former was small, dark, and very bright, almost piercing at times. It was susceptible of varied expression. It gave the inward emotions with telegraphic accuracy and quickness. All have heard of laughing eyes. Dr. Alexander's had that peculiarity. When excited to joy and merriment, his very eyes seemed to laugh. His mouth too was full of playful expression at times, which, though checked by motives of expediency, revealed nevertheless a fountain within of unbounded humor. A more artless and expressive medium of sincere and varied emotions no face ever presented. We used to sit and study it until, sometimes, it seemed to wear a glory such as the great masters give to their pictorial saints.

He was at this time between fifty and sixty years old, but had lost none of his power ; in fact, he was just then at the very height of his influence. When a young preacher he must have been, as indeed we know he was, unboundedly popular. His delicate yet well-



proportioned frame, his symmetrical and speaking features, with his ardent temperament and brilliant rush of thought, must have chained his audience, and sent a thrill of delight through their bosoms. In a journey which he took when a young man, with Rev. Dr. Kollock, through the New England states, it is said that, although Dr. Kollock was a Coryphæus among pulpit orators, yet that audiences hung upon the lips of the youthful Alexander, if not with as much astonishment, yet with more and deeper feeling. This power it would seem had not diminished with the lapse of time. Without losing the ardor of youth, he now carried into the pulpit the experience of years and the resources of learning.

But before we proceed to characterize his preaching; let us take a look at him in the lecture-room. Here he was at home; and here the students came into direct contact with his spirit and his intellect. He was not always alike interesting; nor did he always succeed in keeping alive the attention of his pupils. He seemed never to try—never to work against his own present frame of feeling. He let nature have her own way. If he was nervous and low-spirited, he knew it and felt it. He

came in with the nightmare upon him; he looked gloomy; he spoke as one struggling with some unseen spectre, and went through his task as well as he could. We sympathized with him; we too felt the gloom. But again he would enter with eyes sparkling, and ascend the platform with a spring. His face was radiant; the spectre had been exorcised; he was now all sunshine; he dealt out the stores of wisdom, and sprinkled them with the diamond-dust of beautiful fancies. He would illustrate with anecdotes, and play about his subject with all the force of a fond affection. The lecture-room was luminous at such times. Interrupt him! no matter; he was not displeased; he would take a new excursion in reply. Dr. Alexander was great at such times: and great was the pleasure we experienced. "*Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*"

His forte lay in a clear statement of truth, with a just appreciation of its possible limits. His philosophy never carried him beyond these limits. Here he would pause, and take refuge in the simple verities of God's word. As a reader of the Scriptures, and especially as an expounder, he was uncommonly forcible. He would usually turn to one of the Psalms of Da-

vid. With his finger on his temple, resting his head on his hand and elbow, he would slowly enunciate the sentences, seeming to be himself studying into their meaning. A new thought would strike him. As he caught it, how his eye would sparkle! That thought was ours. It was as if a man had suddenly, in digging, turned up a nugget of gold. His soul seemed fairly to revel in these inspired lyrics. David's harp never sounded sweeter than when its chords vibrated through the expressed emotions of our venerated teacher. His prayers too—how simple; how direct; as if he saw God! How touching, sometimes, were they, when the plaintive feelings of his burdened heart sought an outlet at the mercy-seat.

Stepping with him from the more familiar professorial chair to the more formal and elevated pulpit, let us contemplate him as the preacher of righteousness. If you looked for *great* sermons, in the common acceptance of the term, you would be disappointed. No wreaths of flowery eloquence were woven by him. No prismatic hues danced on the walls of the sanctuary, when he held up the mirror of divine truth. It was the rays of pure white light converging to a focus. He carried into

the pulpit apparently a most oppressive sense of his responsibility. The *man* was lost and swallowed up in the preacher. Dr. Alexander's whole air and aspect in the pulpit was such as became God's ambassador. His manner was characterized by a charming simplicity. It was all nature. It seemed to say, I shall preach to you just as I feel. I am an instrument in God's hands. If he touch the chords, they will make music; if not, all will be discordant or lifeless.

He seldom *read* his sermons. We have known him to do so; but he seemed to struggle through like David with Saul's armor upon him. Usually, almost invariably, he spoke from short notes, flinging himself on the stream of thought with channels dug beforehand. His sermons were discursive, but not rambling. They had method, without being very methodical. His text was a thread of gold running through the whole fabric of his discourse. He was not wont to take a text as a mere motto, and then give us a brilliant essay or a profound disquisition. The sermon grew out of the text, just as the flower springs from the seed, or fruit from the bud and blossom. He expounded the passage; told us in beautifully

simple terms its meaning. This was opening the gates which led into the green pastures; and ere long we were following him through almost celestial landscapes. "When the fit was on him"—that is, when the nerves were in healthful play, and the soul had seen unusual sights of glorious things—then did we sit entranced under the utterances of this almost inspired preacher. We knew in a moment when this was the case. A certain halo seemed to settle around his head and radiate from his features. He spoke at first slowly, seeming to meditate on what he was saying; and then another striking thought, and again a pause. Then thought after thought came more rapidly, in words fit and impressive—words that in their simplicity and strength seemed to press the native Saxon to its utmost power. Now the glow was upon him. The spectacles were raised or snatched away, and that eye of intense brilliancy shot forth its fires; while the voice, at first so small, was waxing, like the Sinaitic trumpet, louder and louder, and penetrating through a phalanx of trembling hearts. How beautifully soft were his cadences, as he dropped on some sweet spot of Christian experience, where joy and sorrow blended, or where

the pilgrim was wending his way through the valley of tears. How it broke into peals of triumph as he followed that same pilgrim up to the pearly gates, and saw him enter amid the salutations of angels!

Dr. Alexander, more than any other man we ever heard, delighted in *experimental* preaching. He himself had gone over the weary way, explored its perils and pitfalls, and he knew how sore were the trials of the journey. He knew all the phases of Christian experience, and he not only allured us to higher worlds, but gloriously led the way. He would startle you at times by putting his exploring finger on the diseased parts of your soul, of the existence of which you were before scarcely conscious. How he loved to bring the heavenly balm to those sore spots, and like a gentle nurse soothe the moral patient, and show him how surely the good Physician would effect a cure. We remember hearing him once in Philadelphia on the temptations and trials of the Christian; and from the beginning to the end of the discourse we could not restrain our tears. As he felt himself, so he preached. If he was in a plaintive mood—a not unusual one for him—a sweet sadness, like one walking in



the twilight, would attend his words. If he was on the mount, thither he bore his audience in a sustained and glorious flight. A man of strong impulses, of deep feeling, his preaching was marked by inequalities such as usually attend men of this cast of character. We have known him fail. He himself knew it; and after a few struggles would close the services prematurely, as if to say to his audience, It is of no use for me to detain you here when I am not in a frame to interest and edify you. But these were exceptions. The usual style was one of great power and pathos; and then the fear seemed to be that he was coming too soon to a close. Great was the privilege to sit at the feet of such a man and such a preacher.





Grove affectionately  
Hummusful  
5

## REV. JOHN SUMMERFIELD.

SUMMERFIELD was in connection with the Methodist church, and began his career as a preacher in England and Ireland. He was very young to commence preaching, but his eminent piety and fine oratory justified it. His training for the sacred calling was not as thorough as it should have been; though subsequently, by diligent study, he supplied in some measure the deficiency. From boyhood he had a love for elocution, and was wont to resort to the courts and other places of forensic debate, and mark the peculiarities of the best speakers. Nature had given him an exquisite taste, which instinctively appropriated all the fine passages which he read or heard, and fixed them in his memory. He at length in a humble way began to try his own powers, and astonished his hearers by the variety and force of his eloquence. Ere long the circle of influence extended, and the youthful preacher became the centre of admiring crowds. He was especially popular in Ireland, where the church

was thronged whenever it was known he was to preach.

In person Summerfield was small—scarcely of medium height, and yet every way well proportioned. He had a finely shaped head; a forehead not high, but broad, and of the purest white, over which usually lay aslant a dark lock of hair. His eyes were peculiar—large, and deep blue, curtained somewhat by the upper lids, giving a pensive expression, with a slight, almost imperceptible cast in one of them, which rather augmented than diminished their expression. His mouth was the perfection of shape, indicating the exquisite taste and poetical tendencies which characterized him. Some perhaps would have called him feminine in his aspect. And it must be admitted that the whole contour and air were so peaceful as to suggest the idea. He might have been called feminine in the loveliness and beauty of his exterior, but certainly he was not effeminate. He had a masculine dignity of character that shone through that fine physical organism, commanding the respect and admiration of all who knew him.

He came to this country with no anterior fame. Few had heard of him, or of the im-

pression which he had made in England. He was judged entirely upon his own merits. It seems that his relatives had made preparations to emigrate to this country; and from this circumstance, as well as for the sake of recruiting his energies, which had been overtasked by too much preaching, young Summerfield determined to visit America, and make it also, if circumstances were favorable, his adopted home.

It so happened that his arrival took place in the spring, at the time when the May anniversaries occur; and the rumor of his celebrity getting abroad, he was invited to speak before the American Bible Society. The young stranger being introduced to the platform, sat, a mere stripling in appearance, among grey heads, learned doctors, and eminent civilians. His rosy cheek, and almost beardless chin and pensive eye attracted attention, and many inquiries passed through the audience concerning him. Who that young and beautiful stranger was, everybody was desirous of ascertaining.

The venerable Boudinot presided. He came in late, wearing his black velvet cap, and being assisted to the chair, proceeded at



once to the business of the meeting. The speeches were eloquent, and the audience was sensibly moved. Still many an eye was fixed on the young stranger, whose calm demeanor would hardly have led one to expect that he was to be called up. But Summerfield was never nervously excited; he had great self-possession. It was this that gave him power, making his best efforts seem like the natural flow of ordinary discourse. The time now came for the President to announce the presence of a stranger from England, a member of the Methodist church, just arrived, from whom they would be glad to hear. With characteristic modesty, but perfect self-possession, he rose and commenced his speech. There was the slightest possible lisp in his utterance, not damaging—we rather thought aiding—the effect; while his voice was as clear and melodious as the notes of a well-played flute.

He began by a reference to the President, whose aspect and age reminded him of one of the patriarchs; and uttering a compliment, not fulsome, but delicate, such as the character of Boudinot justified, he passed on to the great theme, and took the audience with him to the celestial heights. It seemed as if some angel

had been suddenly dropped in human form in the midst of us. Yet he was flesh and blood, having all the sympathies of our common nature, which he brought into requisition as he dilated now on the bright, and now on the sombre aspects of the cause which he advocated. There was every variety in this speech. It flowed sweet and gentle as the stream that steals along the green sward, and then broke into the torrent, whose dashing spray was illuminated by the prismatic hues of a brilliant fancy. He drew his pictures from nature and from the Bible, never coloring too deep, nor dwelling too long, but keeping the panorama in pleasing progress. It was a poetical speech, yet it drew its inspiration from Siloa's fount. It was music such as one would imagine flowed from the vibrations of some angel harp. We could have listened all day to those fine cadences, and gazed on those beautiful images of thought and feeling. When Summerfield sat down, we took a long breath, and the congratulatory looks that succeeded were an ill omen to any speaker who might follow. This speech stamped the reputation of young Summerfield with the American churches. Everybody was inquiring where he could next be heard.

The Methodists of course took him to themselves at first. But the crowds that flocked to John-street made it very inconvenient to the regular worshippers in that church, as they could scarcely find their way to their own pews. Invitations from other denominations began to flow in, and soon the young preacher was found in Presbyterian and other churches, always thronged almost to suffocation.

Some men can make a good speech who cannot preach a good sermon; and the question which naturally suggested itself, after his splendid debut at the Bible Society, was, Will he be equally impressive in the pulpit? But that doubt was speedily removed when Summerfield exchanged the platform for the pulpit. In fact the pulpit was his true position. Nowhere else did his eloquence reach to so sublime a height. He will be remembered by the sermon, not the platform speech. Every quality of mind and body, of soul and spirit, fitted him for the pulpit.

His first sermon which the writer had the pleasure of hearing was addressed to the young. He delighted in preaching to children. He inaugurated almost an entirely new style of preaching to them, that of question and answer,

giving him scope and keeping up the attention of his little auditors. He himself so youthful, with a manner so winning and a smile so playful, gave him the hearts of the children at once. Then his simplicity of diction, his fine imagination, drawing from the storehouse of God's word its beautiful pictures, amplifying them, and turning them in every light upon their admiring eyes, made him the medium of delight as well as of instruction.

Taking our chance with the crowd, we were carried in by the surging mass, and found a standing place in the gallery. Punctual, Summerfield arrived, and ascending the pulpit, he knelt a moment in prayer, and then cast an interested look over his audience. He seemed to be in a heavenly frame. He read the hymn with those sweet intonations and that nice appreciation of the sentiment which touches the heart. But his prayer! Who can describe the pathos, the simplicity, the unction, the almost agonizing earnestness that melted every soul into sympathy, and filled the house with an awful sense of the divine presence? Summerfield's prayers were worth as much as his preaching. They seemed to carry us on the wings of devotion to the third heaven, or to

melt us in penitential sorrow at the foot of the cross.

The text was, "They that seek me early shall find me." He made them promise to look it up and think upon it when they should return to their homes. He repeated it with new and beautiful variations, turning it in this light and that. He spoke of Solomon as a youth, with a choice of earthly and spiritual good set before him. He nobly chose the latter; and then God added to him the former. Now said he, leaning over the desk, and in the most winning manner, "Now tell me what text in the New Testament corresponds with this decision." None could give it. "Have you forgotten that our Lord said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you?'" His quotations were always pertinent, and gave great power to his discourse.

On a certain Sabbath he preached in a small church in the eastern part of the city. Even here the crowd followed him. His text was, "He that goeth forth and weepeth," etc.; from which he said he should consider the weeping and the rejoicing seasons of the Christian. This opened a fine field for his sym-

thetic soul. As with a master's hand he sketched the weeping seasons, the whole place became speedily a Bochim. But ere long the gleams of brightness began to be flung around the Christian's pathway. The tears were dried and a heavenly serenity succeeded. He took us to the mount, gave us the undimmed eye of Moses, and pictured to us the outspread glories of Paradise.

Many will remember the sermon in behalf of the orphans. We obtained a seat in the recess of a window in the gallery. The orphans were seated on a temporary stage directly in front of the pulpit. The discourse was highly appropriate, and bore his audience along on a stream of flowing and sometimes impassioned eloquence. Towards the close, and when the excitement was intense, the speaker dropping his handkerchief as a signal, the orphans rose and stood silent before the audience. Pointing to them, "Look," said he in his own inimitable manner; "let their silence plead." There was scarce an eye in that vast assembly unmoistened. The collection was the largest that had ever been taken.

But wherein lay Summerfield's power? It lay principally in his deep unaffected piety.



He seemed to belong more to heaven than to earth. He was as one apart from the crowd. Under that calm, meek, beautiful exterior there was an almost angelic spirit. He lived and moved in an atmosphere of love. How often have we heard him exclaim,

“If all the world my Jesus knew,  
Then all the world would love him too.”

This heavenly spirit was poured out upon his audience in language chaste and beautiful—in a fervor that warmed and touched the hearts of his hearers.

But this seraphic man ran his race speedily, and as one has said, like the torch-bearer in the Grecian games, reaching the terminus with it still blazing. His delicate framework could not bear the pressure of incessant pulpit labor; and the disease which had been latent for years, suddenly ripened into fatal strength. He died in New York, where he had labored most and was best appreciated, at the age of twenty-eight; and thousands, the writer included, went and dropped their tears upon his early grave.

## SYLVESTER LARNED.

IN person, Larned was a model man. Not tall, but strong built, with an easy, graceful carriage, and a head that the far-famed Apollo might have envied. His dark waving hair was thrown carelessly back from a forehead broad and expressive, while his large grey eye was bright even in repose. His nose was of the Roman cast, and his mouth and chin were expressive of the finest emotions. If Mercury, the imagined god of eloquence, had gone in search of a fine medium to sound forth in rapturous tones the thoughts and emotions of the human soul, he would have seized with delight such an instrument as this. His very look, before he uttered a sentence, was eloquent.

The first time the writer saw Larned was when he presented himself before the Presbytery of New York to be examined for licensure. Another young man was examined at the same time. This candidate was as poorly as Larned was well prepared. Hence the latter seemed even better, and the former worse, than if this contrast had not existed. But Lar-

ned gave his answers with great self-possession, in language exact, clear, and critically nice, proving himself at home on all the contested points; so that when the question of licensure came up, there was but one feeling, that of unqualified approbation. Some of the ministers dissented from certain opinions expressed by the candidate, but allowed not this difference to hinder their cordial votes for his licensure. He stood up and received from his seniors, in a calm and serious manner, authority to preach the gospel.

The youthful and accomplished orator made his *debut* in the city of New York. The audience, who knew not the stranger, saw passing up the aisle a youth of manly proportions and striking countenance, and were at once prepossessed in his favor. He rises in the pulpit, and all is hush. The invocation is uttered in a low, distinct, solemn manner. Every word is appropriate, and the very tones, so subdued and devotional, fall grateful on the ear. He reads the hymn, a familiar one; yet somehow the audience have discovered new beauties in that hymn. Some nice shades of thought had escaped them until now. They had never heard it so read. What was the magic? It

was not simply the deep melody of that voice, but an undefinable apprehension of the latent meaning, a soul sympathy in the very sentiment of the hymn, which told at once on their Christian sensibilities. He had gained his audience. A death-like stillness thenceforward prevailed. He read the Scriptures as he read the hymn, with a certain freshness of feeling that seemed to set the great truths in new and unobserved lights. His reading was a commentary. People glanced at each other to see if all had experienced the same agreeable surprise; and all had. Every eye turned fixedly on that pulpit. They adjusted themselves anew in their seats, and so made preparation for an enjoyment which they knew was at hand. Nor were they disappointed. He named his text from Acts: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." His first sentence struck a key-note in the souls of his listening audience, so that every heart felt it, and felt it alike. There was no sleeping in that audience. The most stupid and indifferent roused up and bent forward to catch the

utterances of the youthful orator. As he proceeded the feeling deepened, and became at length almost painfully exciting. He used no notes. For Larned to have bent over a manuscript would have embarrassed his free, energetic movements as much as for a racehorse to be encased in harness.

He pictured in this discourse the unrighteous Felix, the intemperate or sensual Felix, and Felix standing with all his accumulated guilt upon him at the judgment bar. He then turned the picture so as to reflect it into the bosoms of his hearers. If Felix trembled under Paul, we trembled under Larned. If Felix begged Paul to stop, some of us, I fear, would almost have arrested the orator as he tore his way into the secret heart, and by strokes of terrible rebuke made us feel that we were little less guilty than the notorious Roman. Whether any were converted under the sermon, we know not; sure we are that many were convicted. Possibly, like the great prototype of procrastination, we may have said secretly, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The eloquent preacher closed, as was his wont, by some startling question, which rang like

the archangel's trump through the audience. We held our breath, and actually felt a relief when the echo died away in the silent corridor of the building. At the close of the service, as might have been expected, every one was anxious to know who the stranger was and where he was to preach in the afternoon.

It was ascertained that he would occupy the pulpit of the Garden-street church. Thither of course the crowd flocked, for it is incredible how such news will fly; and long ere the service commenced the pews and aisles were densely packed. His subject on this occasion was *repentance*; text, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." He dwelt on its nature and obligations. As in the morning, so now every thing was in keeping; the manner dignified, earnest, solemn: the voice full, deep, melodious; the look majestic, heavenly. The whole soul beamed from every feature of that speaking face. How quick was the electric influence felt between the pulpit and the pew! Every heart was in the speaker's hand. How sublime are the triumphs of true eloquence!

In the course of this sermon he had occasion to refer, as a motive to repentance, to the sufferings and death of Christ. The writer can



never forget the scene. He was a mere youth at the time; but his heart had been touched by the love of the Saviour, and he knew how to appreciate a picture such as the preacher drew. The audience had been carried along on the torrent of eloquence, which at length flowed in the direction of Calvary. The preacher, as he led them towards that sacramental spot, began to dilate in tones pathetic on the awful guilt which necessitated such sufferings on the part of the Son of God. His own voice trembled, his eye grew moist, his utterance choked; but he kept on amid the tears and sighs of his audience. Still he kept on; and turning to the wall behind him, he drew on it an imaginary cross, with its nails and its crown of thorns, and its pale, uplifted victim. It started out on the cold blank as if we saw the actual scene, and scarce an eye in that assembly but wept in sympathy, if not in penitence.

We all know how difficult it is to describe or picture forth such a scene, to do any justice to it. It may be overdone, and so lose its impressiveness; or it may be done in cold detail, and so cease to reach the fountains of feeling. The painter cannot paint it, the poet cannot put it into numbers, and the orator makes a

daring attempt who presumes to sketch it before a listening audience. But Larned ventured upon it. He knew his own power. He had a proper appreciation of just how much and how little should be said. He knew too that he himself must enter with all his heart's sensibility into the scene; and he did. He said not one word too much, nor dwelt one moment too long. He took us where he himself went, to the very foot of the cross. He made us feel as if we stood in sight of it—within hearing of the sad death utterances. Raising his great tearful eyes towards it, he asked us how we could refuse to repent. The effect was overwhelming. It was a bold attempt for any preacher, especially for one so young. But it was no failure, as every one who recollects the occasion will bear me witness.

The triumph of sacred eloquence was never more marked. Many of our most worthy and influential citizens were present, and gave unmistakable proofs, in their fixed attention and uncontrollable emotions, of the power which the young preacher wielded. Near me stood—for he could not obtain a sitting—the late George Griffin, then among the most brilliant advocates of the New York bar. The tall

figure, with grey hair and green goggles, scarce altering his posture during the whole of the discourse, rapt in mute attention, showed now and then by the quivering of the facial muscles, how the orator was exploring the depths of feeling *within*. Casting a glance at this distinguished lawyer, and observing his emotions, methought that with a theme such as the minister of the gospel possesses, and a heart alive to its magnitude, and oratorical powers of the highest order, there could not be a more sublime scene than the one here presented.

In conversation subsequently with John Quincy Adams, the subject of Larned's eloquence coming up, he remarked that he had never heard his equal in the pulpit.


Wherever Larned went, the same rush to hear him and enthusiastic admiration prevailed. He was solicited to take the first stations with the largest salaries. But he refused all these tempting offers. He had set his heart on a great self-denying enterprise. Looking over the wide extent of the land, he thought he heard the Macedonian cry from a city where mammon and pleasure reigned. Bent only on duty, and regarding not the peril, he threw himself with his characteristic energy into this

new field. New Orleans was destitute in a great measure of evangelical influence. This determined Larned to make it the field of his future labors. The decision gave great satisfaction to the pious, who rallied around him; and by their efforts a beautiful church edifice was soon reared, and filled with a respectable congregation. But alas, "the arrow that flieth by day" had been prepared; and on the second summer of his residence there, determining to confront the dangerous fever for the sake of his flock, that arrow reached his vitals, and he fell a victim to his self-sacrificing and heroic devotion. The news sped through the land, and all Christian hearts gave him the tribute of a sincere lamentation.

If asked in what Larned's power consisted as a pulpit orator, we should answer, in a *combination* of qualities. His person, so beautiful and dignified; his voice, so full of melody, adapting itself with the nicest inflections to the sentiment; his just appreciation of the subject; his soul of high and generous mould, communing habitually with great themes; his Christian enthusiasm, enveloping the whole man with a glowing atmosphere: all these qualities combined to make Larned the peerless pulpit orator.

## DR. ASAHEL NETTLETON.

SOME may express surprise at seeing the name of Nettleton on the list of eloquent preachers. He is remembered as a successful revivalist, as having published the "Village Hymns," and as occupying late in life a comparatively obscure position in a Theological seminary. What claim then has he to the distinction of a pulpit orator? We will explain. We do not place his claim on the same grounds as that of Mason, Alexander, or Griffin. He possessed neither their learning nor their genius; but he had no superior in his day in self-sacrificing zeal. No preacher better understood the human heart; none had greater penetration into the phases of that "deceitfulness of sin" which beguiles the human understanding and corrupts the motives. If he had studied the didactics of religion less than some others, he had clear apprehensions of religion itself. If the graces of oratory were not conspicuous in his preaching, that which is said to be the aim or end of eloquence, namely, conviction and persuasion, was never more signally



illustrated. The writer knew him well, and was oft refreshed under his ministry in the great revivals of 1820-21, while a student in Yale college. The whole city was overshadowed with the cloud of mercy, and the renovating influences kept falling, more or less, for the space of two years.

Originally Dr. Nettleton's intention was to embark on some foreign mission; but by the force of circumstances this intention was defeated, and he found himself in the work of home evangelization, to which thenceforward his life and labors were consecrated. He put himself on the current of events, and was borne along as by a divine impulse. He went nowhere without having, as he supposed, a call of Providence. He left when the same mysterious index finger pointed him away. From every quarter invitations flowed in upon him; but only those were responded to which seemed to him to contain in them the voice of God. If the cry, "Come over and help us," came from a church which was paralyzed by inaction or corrupted by worldliness, he gave it usually no heed. The supposition was that they were looking less to the Almighty than to an arm of flesh. Nothing grieved him more



than the idea, implied or expressed, that *he* could breathe life into dry bones. He regarded it both as an insult to heaven and to his own understanding. He! Why, there was never a more consciously impotent human instrument. Never was there a preacher more oblivious of self, nor one that entered more into the spirit of the sentiment, "Our sufficiency is of God." On one occasion, having arrived in a town with a view to labor for the upbuilding of Zion, he overheard certain prominent members of the church saying in an exultant strain, "Mr. Nettleton has come, and we shall have a revival of religion." The words pierced him to the heart. He went to his closet and wept. He ordered his horse at once, saying as he took leave, "I can't stay here any longer. The people are in a wrong state of mind." His absence created inquiry. Christians began to study into the matter. They saw their error in looking to man instead of God. They repented and put their faces in the dust; and soon the indications of the Spirit's presence were manifest. Hearing of this, Mr. Nettleton returned and preached to them with great zeal and success.

There was at first view nothing in his ap-

pearance that was striking or calculated to arrest the attention. Of medium height, with a somewhat haggard look, large blue eyes, prominent Roman nose, high oval forehead, with light and slightly grey hair brought up from each side to cover its baldness, and an air of abstraction, as if conversing either with his own thoughts or with the great Invisible, he seemed always bent on some object, near or remote, connected with the salvation of men. His whole energies appeared to be working in this direction. His prayers all breathed of this. If he was seen conversing with an individual, you might be sure that he was trying to get into the sympathies of that heart, so as to reach it with the truth of God. This he did, not by direct and blunt assailment, but gradually and gently, as the sunbeam steals into the crevice. His knowledge of men went deeper than any minister's I have known; and it was the more marvellous, as he was never known to have mingled much in promiscuous society. There was a sweet and attractive gentleness in his manners. He seemed to have conquered all the proud, sensual, or irritable feelings. An air of vestal purity surrounded him. You felt as if in presence of

not only an amiable, but a holy man. These traits, by disarming prejudice, made his ministry potent for good. In many respects he resembled the apostle Paul. The self-denial, the absolute self-renunciation, the absorption of his whole soul in his work, the heavenly mindedness, the simplicity and singleness of his aim, all reminded one of that apostle. What was said of Paul by the Corinthians, that his presence was weak and his speech contemptible, might in some degree be applied, especially by those who judge of eloquence by shining qualities, to Mr. Nettleton. He lacked the grandeur of person and of intellect which some of the great pulpit orators have possessed. His voice was sharp rather than full or melodious, and his gestures, though emphatic, were ordinarily not graceful. His power as a preacher lay in intense earnestness. His whole being was concentrated in efforts to save the soul from death. Out of the pulpit as well as in it, this was evident. No man ever dreamed of attributing to him any selfish ends. It was manifest that the highest motives only swayed him. To this noble, disinterested spirit, more than to any graces of oratory, did he owe his influence and his success.

There was, however, at times an eloquence that rose above all rhetorical rules, and though it dazzled not the fancy, stormed and carried the conscience and the heart. True, the Spirit of God was present to evoke it and give it power; so that every word told with terrible emphasis, and every sentence fell like the hail-stones in Revelation, each one weighing a talent, causing men to cry out in audible accents, What shall we do? Still, none who listened on such occasions could deny that for clearness, force, and pungency, his sermons were unequalled. It was the highest style of pulpit eloquence, for it carried souls on its pure, impetuous current into the divinely appointed ark of safety. There was in it a spiritual elevation, as if God himself was speaking—as if the lips were all aglow with a coal from heaven's altar.

The preaching of this distinguished evangelist, to be appreciated, had to be heard continuously, and under circumstances of more than ordinary interest. His first efforts were modest, his manner calm but clear, and his aim was rather to awaken interest than to excite the passions. Usually he began with the church, hoping to bring them to a higher tone

of consecration. If successful in this, he turned his thoughts upon the careless and the impenitent, believing that a very intimate relation subsisted between a revival in the church and a resurrection of the dead in sin. His preaching had a strict adaptation to these varying circumstances. It rose as the current of feeling rose. It kept on, growing deeper and more impetuous as the revival influence augmented. It was like an electrical atmosphere, showing on the distant clouds some faint coruscations. But as they rolled up and came nearer, sharp flashes might be seen. By and by the whole concave was trembling with awful detonations. Such was Nettleton's preaching as the revival atmosphere deepened in breadth and volume. We have known him preach in one of the largest churches in New Haven, every foot of the floor and aisles filled with dense masses, all wearing such a look as can be depicted only by the Spirit of God. Hundreds under conviction turned their tearful eyes in the direction of the pulpit, their sighs almost audible, repressed only by the proprieties of the place. How still—how intensely, awfully still! Truly, this is the house of God; yes, to many the gate of heaven.

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The preacher is himself oppressed, sustained only by the thought that God can and will do his own work. He has gone on and up with the advancing tide of feeling, until now his whole soul is elevated to its utmost power and energy. Talk of eloquence! Never before had I a just impression of what pulpit oratory is. Here is a humble preacher, uttering words so simple that a child can comprehend their meaning, with a manner earnest and solemn, and a heart deeply touched with emotion; and as he goes on, by illustrations so striking, reasoning so convincing, and appeals so tender, the audience can scarce refrain from an outburst of agony. Tears rained silently in those pews, and convictions went deeper and deeper, while many an eye was turned anxiously towards the cross, the only hope set before them. To appreciate Mr. Nettleton, one should have heard him as the writer heard him, under the culminating power of a great revival. Never shall I forget the sermon on "Dives and Lazarus," delivered in the very height of the religious excitement. Rich men were there. It seemed as if everybody was there, so great was the crowd. The preacher was in his best frame. He gave full scope to his ardent soul.

He had great power of description. It was not imagination so much as vivid conception. He could set religious truth in strong lights. On this occasion he carried us forward to the awful and glorious future. He took us into heaven, and even into hell. He gave us a glimpse of the glorified Lazarus, and startled us by a vision of the rich sensualist wrapped in sheeted flame. Towards the close the excitement became almost unbearable. He summoned the lost Dives back to this world. He bade the audience make way for him, pointing along the central aisle. The preacher gazed fearfully in the same direction. The audience instinctively half turned their heads. Now the flame-tormented soul ascends the pulpit. Starting aside, the preacher says, "Listen to one risen from the dead—risen even from hell;" when in deep despairing tones the imagined Dives begins to address them. He warns them as only a returned emissary from hell could warn men. It was a scene of intense interest. Never could it have been carried through but for the wave of feeling which had been gathering for weeks, and was now at its flood. This sanctioned it, saved it, made it a success. Many were awakened by it to a sense of their sins.



The sermons of Dr. Nettleton were usually constructed in a clear, methodical manner. The language was of the simplest kind. The point soon began to appear, and grew sharper and more prominent as he proceeded. Towards the conclusion he would make some sentences cut as with a two-edged sword. He used much repetition. A strong, pungent truth would be echoed once, and twice, and even thrice, each reverberation louder and more solemn, as if he hoped by repeated blows to drive it through the most obdurate conscience. I never knew a preacher who could repeat a sentence so often without diminishing its power. He aimed at direct impression; and no minister perhaps in this country has been more successful in turning many to righteousness, nor will any, as we think, shine more illustriously among the stars of the celestial firmament.

## DR. LYMAN BEECHER.

DR. BEECHER'S power as a pulpit orator culminated about the period of his removal from Litchfield, Conn., to the Hanover-street church, Boston. He was then not much beyond fifty years of age, and his reputation as a divine was established on a firm basis. The physical man, of medium height and breadth, was in its perfection; characterized by strong muscles, a well-set frame, a countenance with the lines of strength predominating over those of age, and more remarkable for vigor of expression than for the beauty of its lineaments. His forehead was not high nor broad, but expressive of intellect; and was surmounted by a heavy mass of iron gray hair. The contour of his face was decidedly Roman. His eye was perhaps the most speaking feature, kindling with geniality in social life, and full of fire when the great themes of religion were under discussion. His mouth was the very symbol of decision; and even when his lips were closed, would give one the idea of indomitable purpose. As age advanced, the iron

gray hair changed to snowy whiteness, and the more genial expression remained long after the high intellectual force had abated.

His ministry began at East Hampton on the east end of Long Island, where the ocean's thunder and the scream of the eagle gave wildness and sublimity to the scene. Here the young giant cradled his genius and nursed it into strength. He was at home amid these wild scenes, and never manifested more natural delight—amounting sometimes almost to rapture—than when he was buffeting the waves in some light craft, or drawing from the deep its finny treasures.

Yet this great mind was at work, perhaps, at the very moment that he was indulging this joyous pastime. Who can say but in those hours of relaxation by the deep sea he was elaborating those trains of thought which were afterwards to be hurled with startling emphasis upon the astonished audience.

He had another mode of recreation which it may not be improper here to mention; namely, the use of the violin. He was fond of the instrument, and employed it to rest the wearied faculties. Having occasion to call upon him, the writer inquired at the door if

he was in. The answer was, "Yes; and by following the sound of the violin which you hear, he may be found on the second floor." So, led by the strain of music, the door was reached and opened. There sat the venerable divine still drawing the bow, and so absorbed, that for an instant the intruder was not noticed. When he looked up, he gave one of those genial smiles so expressive of his benevolent heart, and said, "Do not be surprised at my occupation; this is my pipes and tobacco."

It was while Dr. Beecher was at East Hampton that he composed his sermon on "the Sovereignty of God." It was delivered in Newark before the Synod of New York and New Jersey, and so great was the impression, that it brought the author at once into the foreground of distinguished preachers. There was depth of reasoning, force of illustration, and uncommon Saxon vigor in the style. It met the popular objections, and swept them away as with the force of a whirlwind. It revealed the immovable foundations on which the doctrine rested; and none who heard it, or who, after it was in print, read it, could fail to see that it bore the stamp of an herculean intellect.

From this date the hitherto obscure pastor of East Hampton drew upon him the eyes of the religious public, and his services were frequently required on conspicuous occasions.

From East Hampton he removed to Litchfield, Conn. Into this new field of labor he brought with him the resources of thought and culture which he had been accumulating in his earlier ministry on Long Island. It was a more interesting as well as wider sphere, inasmuch as it furnished not only more minds to act upon, but minds of a high order. Here was the celebrated law school to which the young aspirants for legal and political distinction resorted, and where the ablest teachers of the science of jurisprudence dwelt. These, for the most part, were attendants upon his ministry. It was just the stimulus which such a mind as his needed.

Every Sabbath brought under his eye judges and lawyers and law students—minds of great acumen thoroughly trained to discussion on subjects of profound interest, and able to appreciate the highest intellectual efforts in the departments of law and of divinity. Dr. Beecher was the man for *them*, and they were the audience for *him*.

Accordingly all his energies were tasked to bring forth divine truth in its varied aspects, and to assert its claims upon the intellect and the heart. Here were elaborated some of his discourses which have taken rank among the ablest productions of American divines. "The Bible a Code of Laws" was one of them, in which, after a concise array of principles and statements, supported by reasoning brief but convincing, he proceeds to draw numerous inferences, that come along in succession, like platoons of artillery, growing heavier in their tread, until the foundations of seductive and fatal error seem to tremble under the march of this "army with banners." When this discourse was delivered in Park-street church, Boston, it was regarded as one of the most eloquent that had ever been listened to.

This celebrated sermon, with others of the same type, was the product of long continued thought. It had been delivered to his people at Litchfield in parts, running along over several Sabbaths, until it was completed. These separate links, seemingly of massive iron, were then forged into one strong chain; and so, by a power of condensation which its author possessed more than almost any preacher we have

ever known, this grand product of a great intellect was given at a single delivery.

In a ministers' meeting, where the doctor made a report of one of his discourses, giving the heads and many of the illustrations, so original and powerful was the train of thought, that a younger member of the association, struck with its great force, inquired how long it took him to make that sermon. "A lifetime," was his laconic reply. To this power of condensation is to be attributed much of the influence exerted by this strong, nervous writer. There are no platitudes, no long-drawn array of words or figures. The sentences seem to have been subjected to an hydraulic pressure, until not a word can be spared nor an argument omitted without manifest loss to the effect of the discourse.

His *Sermons on Intemperance*, coming out as they did at the very commencement of the moral crusade, are a wonderful series. By their power of logic, by their force of illustration, by all the pictorial horrors of the vice assailed, including warnings the most startling and appeals the most touching, clothed in language as remarkable for its strength as for its classic beauty, they bring out the genius and



power of the man, and constitute a claim to the admiration as well as the gratitude of the public. A heavier blow at the gigantic vice of the age has not been given.

As an eloquent minister, Dr. Beecher, to be fully appreciated, must be regarded in the practical and experimental, as well as the controversial field. True, he was in polemic discussions almost unrivalled. He could construct an argument on the spur of the moment. His mind acted with electrical rapidity, and only needed an atmosphere to start the current and send off the fiery explosions. Rationalism never met a more formidable antagonist, and bald infidelity could not stand for a moment before the thunder-peals of his eloquence. Still we must look at him in the lecture-room, or follow him into revival scenes, where his whole soul was drawn out in analyzing Christian experience, and in the deep heart-rending emotions which a sight of convicted sinners produced. We must listen to his unpremeditated and tender appeals, in order to know more thoroughly the power of the preacher. Here his piety flamed up by its own kindling emotions. The great mind here dropped at once into the spirit of the child;

and uniting the grandeur of a strong intellect with the tenderness of a sympathetic heart, he gave out lessons of love such as filled the whole place with a heavenly atmosphere. No man was more at home in revival scenes than he, and few on such occasions have been more honored as instruments in the conversion of souls.

His introduction into Boston was under propitious circumstances. Evangelical religion had received a new impulse. The revival spirit had begun to manifest itself in several of the churches; and the new one, to which he was called, was already aglow with the heavenly fire. Looking about for a leader, they saw one in the eloquent pastor at Litchfield. He came at their call; and at once the city of the pilgrims rang with his cry. His church was thronged not so much from curiosity as to hear one who, with overpowering eloquence, preached God's sovereignty and God's mercy; who held up the cross as the only palladium of a sinner's safety; who knew nothing among men but "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

When, by an inscrutable providence, the Hanover-street church was burned down, a new one arose quickly from its ashes. Crowds pressed into it; and such was the power of

God upon his preaching, that many who "went to mock remained to pray." Conversions were numerous; and the church at length, overflowing as to its membership, began to colonize into other new churches, until the evangelical faith took root in every part of the city.

At this period we suppose Dr. Beecher's power as to eloquence reached its highest point. He was never more eloquent—never had greater weight of influence—never struck heavier blows at the kingdom of darkness.

A conscientious sense of duty led him to the West, where he assumed the responsibilities of both a pastor and a theological teacher. This twofold burden was too heavy even for his herculean shoulders to bear. His iron frame began to give way. It became necessary first to cast off some of the burden, and after a while the whole. He retired from the more onerous and active duties of the ministry; and reappearing, with a weight of threescore years upon him, among his old friends at the East, he was received with open arms and warm, grateful hearts. Gradually he succumbed to the pressure of advancing years, but still retaining all the warmth of a piety

the sincerity and earnestness of which none that knew him ever questioned.

Dr. Beecher's eloquence was unlike that of any other preacher whom we have known. It was not marked by studied action, or previous drill, or the usual rules of elocution. There was no majesty of person, no liquid rotundity of voice, no gracefulness of manner. He dealt sparingly in figures of speech, using them only when they gave greater force to the sentiment. His manner in the pulpit some would call awkward, others blunt, and others perhaps even harsh. Yet amid all this, who that ever listened to him when his great mind was roused, and the course was clear, and the whole moral and mental man was strained for the race, can fail to concede a power of eloquence which carried all before it?

His great power lay in the *thought*, and such thought as seldom takes verbal life. It was such thought as came from a mind of deep original conceptions. It was less like gold-dust than gold nuggets. It impressed one not only with the richness of the specimens, but with the untold richness of the mine from which they were dug.

But was there nothing impressive in his

manner? There *was*. Earnestness was *one* feature. Never was a preacher *more* earnest. There was animation. Every nerve quivered under it. Though not musical, the voice was strong, accumulating power as he proceeded, and driving home the grand logic of the discourse. There was at times emotion. This was especially discernible in his sermons on practical religion. But the grand secret of his eloquence after all lay, as we have said, in the strong original thought, set in a frame of logic so bold and clear that the most common intellect could understand him. Conviction with him seemed to be the great thing. To use a military figure, he stormed the moral affections by approaches through the intellect. He first gained the assent of the reason, or rather *forced* it, and then directed his blows upon the conscience and the heart.

His power in the pulpit was also augmented by his peculiar use of the Saxon tongue. Never have we listened to a man who could express a theological idea in clearer or more forcible terms, such as one of the commonest of his hearers could understand and recognize as appropriate. He had Carlisle's strength, without his verbal eccentricity.

Nor was Dr. Beecher wanting in *pictorial* power. Listening to him on one occasion when describing the penitent woman who kneeled at our Lord's feet, and washed them with her tears, the whole scene in concise but graphic language was placed vividly before the imagination. Every part of the description had life. It was the power of a moral painter using words as the artist uses colors, to bring out and give force to the preconceived picture.

That Dr. Beecher's style was perfect not his warmest admirer would assert; that he lacked the graces usually desired and expected in a pulpit orator every one who knew him must admit; that his manner was sometimes so abrupt as to grate on the ears of his more sensitive hearers, even this we are obliged to concede. But after all, his noble range of thought, his entire consecration to his work, his intense love of Christ, and his exultant faith in the certain triumphs of truth and righteousness, his simplicity and sincerity seen in every act and word, his unselfish and unworldly spirit, all combined to render him one of the most powerful and influential preachers our country has produced.

## DR. HENRY B. BASCOM.

MANY years ago, passing down the North river, I fell in company with several Methodist ministers. They were on their way to the New York Conference. Said one of them to me, "Have you ever heard Dr. Bascom?" I had not. "Well, then," he added, "you have not heard the most eloquent preacher in the United States." I could not of course deny it, and my politeness forbade me to express the doubt which I entertained. But I determined to judge for myself, should the opportunity occur. Soon it did. The announcement that the great pulpit orator was to preach drew an immense audience to the Murray-street church. Every seat and standing-place was occupied long ere the service commenced. From a glance, it was evident that our most intelligent citizens were there. Ministers, lawyers, editors—in fact all professions were numerously represented. No man could wish for a finer or more appreciating audience. There was a preliminary rustle—usual on such



occasions—when the preacher entered and took the central chair on the platform pulpit.

Dr. Bascom's appearance and manner were not ministerial. Had we not known him to be a preacher, we should have taken him for a spruce politician. He had a jaunty look, and his shining black stock and well-trimmed whiskers and fashionable costume seemed not in keeping with the usually staid and very plain exterior of the clergy of his own denomination. This peculiarity had given umbrage to the leaders of Methodism, and had caused no small personal vexation to their not very acquiescent brother. The Methodism of these days looks more to the *inner* and less to the *outer* man; and a minister's costume, unless it were in the extreme of the fashion, would hardly be noticed. The truth is, Dr. Bascom's fine person and free, easy manner made any garb look well on him; so that on one occasion, when a scrupulous father made him a present of a round-cut coat on the condition that he would wear it, it was found, on donning it, that he looked more genteel than before. He had what might be called a dashing air, the growth, apparently, of that bold and self-reliant feeling which rough western life

almost necessarily produces. For long years in early manhood he had struggled with poverty; had been exposed to perils in the wilderness; had forded rivers and swamps; slept in log huts; lived on poor and scanty fare; studied his sermons by the light of pine knots; rode thousands of miles to preach to here and there a scattered remnant of humanity—his audiences amounting to a hundred at most, and reduced sometimes to four or five, and they of the rudest kind.

Such was Bascom's training, such the school in which he learned to think, to act, to suffer, to trust. But now, when we saw him, he had graduated to a higher sphere. He had come up out of the wilderness. Still that wilderness had cast about him the mantle of a sublime freedom, which, though he had exchanged the camel's hair and leathern girdle for the broadcloth, was discernible in every movement of mind and muscle. His people did not for a long time understand him, misinterpreted his manners, and criticized needlessly his exterior. But the sublime, self-reliant man kept on, leaving to time and truth the charge of his reputation. That sacred trust they kept, and when we heard him in Murray-street, the mists of

prejudice had been exhaled, and his reputation shone out upon a cloudless sky. His person was prepossessing, dignified; his eye, dark and piercing, glanced nervously over the vast assembly. In every countenance he saw high expectation, and though well prepared to meet it, he evidently suffered under a secret tremor. Others led the devotions. Bascom, it was said, seldom prayed in public—never when the occasion was conspicuous and he the preacher. Why? Some said “he had not the gift.” But another reason may be suggested. Very probably he was so absorbed in his subject, and so excited by the presence of a vast crowd, that he felt unfit to perform a service requiring a calm and reverential frame of spirit. He seems not to have entered into the spirit of the old divine when asked by a young preacher to offer prayer: “No,” said he; “whet your own sword.” Bascom was accustomed to whet his, we hope, before he came to the sanctuary.

What shall we say of the discourse on this occasion? That it equalled expectation? High as that was, he soared far above it. He was then in the zenith of his power. His voice was flexible, but well controlled. It had compass and clearness both. His emphasis was

admirably laid ; his utterance rapid, yet every word distinct. His gestures were forced from him, and therefore graceful and impressive. His reserved power—if we may so call it, which always distinguishes the true orator—was felt to be immense. High as his flights were, it seemed as if he could with ease have gone far higher. Wide as his range was, it was felt that he was putting a check on his impetuous and discursive intellect. His eye grew brighter and brighter, until the gleams of the soul, darting through it, were like heat lightning playing and flashing incessantly from out the lurid cloud. He gained his audience at first, and held them to the close in rapt attention. It was like the mystic symbol of Ezekiel—a fiery car, with wheels rolling on clouds—taking us up and putting us down at pleasure. We were entirely in his hands. Our judgment was taken away from us. There was no power to criticize. Our imagination was excited, and the whole concave of thought seemed lit up as with a brilliant aurora.

He had a great theme—Africa and her ill-fated sons ; colonization, the bright star of hope to a depressed race. It was a subject on which he had thought long and felt deeply, until his

emotions had become like the pent-up fires of a volcano. Both his intellect and his sympathies were intensely excited. His genius asked no sublimer theme. He pictured Africa, her past and her present ; her grandeur of old, and her degradation now. He dwelt upon her wrongs ; he predicted the future civilization that was to overspread her shores ; he recognized Providence in bringing Africa here, baptizing her in suffering, to prepare her for her mission and to elevate her to glory. It was a discourse of overwhelming power. The critics might say that it was too picturesque, too exuberant in metaphor ; in fact, oratorically *too* splendid. But this was the preacher's forte. He lacked not logical power, but his preëminence rested mainly on a brilliant fancy, which hovered over his logic and shed her rainbow beauties upon it. Yet every thing was natural. There was no straining after images. They came robed in imperial beauty. There was no artificial tone, no swell and cadence, no studied attitudes. He spoke as a natural orator ; in a style conversational, but intensely earnest, as one would speak whose whole aim was to carry conviction by the combined power of intellect and passion.

This discourse was over two hours long, but seemed not longer than an ordinary sermon. Listening to such eloquence, "we take no note of time." Hours seem minutes, and we dread the coming of the last sentence. So deep was the impression, that, as the vast audience broke up, the commonplace exclamations of eulogy were scarcely heard. It seemed superfluous to ask anybody how they liked it. The deep current of feeling was depicted in every man's countenance.

"His style," says one, "combined the beauty of Young, the strength of Wesley, the eloquence of Chalmers, and the sublimity of Hall." But this is extravagant. He had not the classical purity of Hall, neither had he the gorgeous drapery of Chalmers. And had he the nervous simplicity of Wesley? Let Wesley's followers answer. Still, his splendid fancy threw over his composition such brilliant lights as dazzled the eye, and made it incapable, in a measure, of detecting the manifest faults of his style. He lacked precision, condensation. He was too lavish of words. They were piled up in massive grandeur, so as sometimes almost to conceal the thought. Metaphor followed metaphor, until we seemed like

travellers among the tropics, assailed and overpowered by aromatic sweets, entranced by floral beauties, and amazed at the deep perennial verdure. But such is the very style that attracts and enraptures a listening audience. To alter it for one more correct, would have been like clipping the wings of an eagle, and then bidding him soar towards the sun. Bascom's genius would have died under such rigid discipline. He must be himself. Vain would have been the attempt to bind around such a mind the restraints of artificial rules. He would have cast them off with the same ease and proud disdain as Samson cast off the green withes or the flaxen cords. Whatever violation of rhetorical rules may be chargeable on this great pulpit orator, certain it is that no preacher in this country has made a deeper impression on the popular mind. "And," says the eloquent Abbe Maury, "the people are the best and only proper judges of our eloquence."

Dr. Bascom, some have affirmed, was a memoriter preacher. But this his biographer denies. *He* says that his custom was to draw out his plan on a piece of paper, and then walking to and fro, for hours sometimes, he



studied the arguments and shaped out the illustrations. This done, he threw it aside until the time for its delivery. "From this habit," he goes on to say, "young orators might learn a useful lesson. Nothing is more common perhaps, with public speakers, than to study intensely their subjects up to the moment of appearing in public; the natural effect of which is to weaken, if not prostrate, the mental energies before coming to the point where these must be called fully into action or the speaker fail. Bascom understood the philosophy of the mind too well to expend in the *drill* the strength essential to success in the *battle*."

His piety; what shall we say of that? To enter largely into it would lead us away from our main intent. Suffice it to say, it was deep, without being ostentatious. His zeal was intense, without being fanatical; his self-denial for Christ's sake, seldom, in modern times, equalled. As to his creed, it may be learned from the closing scene. Among the last words which he uttered were these: "All my trust and confidence is in almighty goodness, as revealed in the cross of Christ."

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## DR. EDWARD PAYSON.

THE name of Payson is embalmed in the memory of evangelical Christians. He was in some respects the model minister. His deeply sympathetic nature led him to rejoice with them that rejoiced, and to weep with them that wept. He was the father as well as the pastor of his flock. So thoroughly did he identify himself with them, that even their earthly trials became a bond of mutual sympathy.

He is a fit representative of the emotional class of preachers. His mental was much influenced by his nervous constitution. The latter was a fine-stringed instrument, keyed up to its utmost tension. The intellect, like the invisible wind acting on an Æolian harp, would touch now a plaintive and now an inspiring chord. As he felt, so he spoke.

He was not a man of remarkable bodily presence. To use the language of one who knew him intimately, "He was of medium height, good proportions, a little stooping in posture; hair black, face angular, and features strongly marked with expressions of quiet benevolence

and decision; eyes dark and full, slightly retired under a brow somewhat raised, placid and a little downcast in their ordinary expression, but keen and scrutinizing when raised and fastened on an object. In silence his countenance was marked with care and thoughtfulness, which were awakened in conversation into the most vivid expressions of mental activity and emotion."

The *religious* was the modifying and all-controlling element in Payson's character. Every other feature took its shape and coloring from this. As the coin in passing through the mint, whether it be gold or copper, receives the same external stamp, so his words and thoughts, his ordinary discourse as well as his highest intellectual efforts, bore the imprint of his heavenly spirit. In the pulpit or out, the *minister* was never lost in the *man*. His official robe was not put on and off, but worn ever. Hence no man in conversation with him would think of indulging in levity, or even ordinary familiarity. Some may object to this as forming a barrier to social freedom, and tending to drive away those who, by a more free and familiar style of manners, might have been won to piety and virtue. But we say,

let every one act in character. If a minister's soul is taken up with heavenly things, as was Dr. Payson's, it would be folly to sacrifice the religious to the social spirit. It would in fact be hypocrisy. The man whose temperament and tendencies, on the other hand, are more social than religious, would only play a part by foisting into his conversation, from a sense of duty, sentiments the force of which he did not really feel. Still it must be regretted that in Dr. Payson's manner the sombre frequently prevailed over the genial. He often lacked that sacred hilarity, if we may so term it, which graced the character of Legh Richmond and John Angel James, and which, while it would not have lessened his influence as a minister, would have made him more generally attractive as a man.

Much of the apparent gloom which tinged his countenance and manner was the result of a disordered state of the physical system. "The harp of a thousand strings" was only occasionally in tune. When it was, it spoke heavenly music. Did he mistake this for the ecstasy of devotion? It may have had some influence on his religious emotions. His heaven of joy may have had something to do with

recuperated nerves under a clear atmosphere, and his valley and shadow of death may in part be attributable to floating icebergs and easterly fogs acting on the most sensitive of beings. On one page of his diary are written mourning, lamentation, and woe; and on the next he breaks out in songs of rapture, in the full belief that God is both his refuge and his portion. In this respect, one is reminded of David's experience, as given in the Psalms. The same alternations of hope and despondency appear in many of the sacred lyrics. The most plaintive beginning ends often in the most triumphant shouts of praise. Payson's heart seems to have been set to the same key-note, and to have reverberated the same alternately mournful and exultant strains. The temperaments of the two were not perhaps very dissimilar. But though Payson's religious experience was somewhat modified by physical causes, we would by no means deny that spiritual influences were at work in these deep and diversified agitations of his soul. The emotional part of religion is a subtle and mysterious subject, shaping itself somewhat according to the peculiar temperament of the individual. Men of strong emotions and deep passions are

exercised very differently from those who are naturally cold and phlegmatic. Payson was of the former class. His soul was a sea of emotion, stirred or tranquillized by the breath of the Spirit, dark and tempestuous at times, and anon reflecting from its calm surface the image of heaven.

This emotional nature was drawn out in the closet under great wrestlings. It appeared in the social meeting, where tears were mingled with entreaties. It went with him into the pulpit. He looked over his audience as our Lord looked down upon Jerusalem, and his soul was stirred to its very depths in view of the impenitent and their hastening doom. He seized hold of the sinner as the deputed angel did of Lot, and would fain have dragged him from the fiery ruin. Hence in his sermons there were overwhelming appeals and deep-toned warnings. So great at times were his emotions, that it seemed to one listening as if he had gathered his impressions of eternal retribution from actual vision.

The impression which Payson's preaching made upon his hearers was that of one who had no thought of any thing but the salvation of souls. Nobody could say that *he* was mere-

ly discharging an official duty, much less would any be disposed to attribute to him a desire for popularity. The very aspect of the man suggested the idea of sincerity. Every word tended to deepen that impression. Immediately, even at the first utterances, there was established a sympathy between the preacher and his auditors. It was not his commanding appearance, nor any studied elocution, nor a remarkably fine voice: it was rather the *spirit* of the man—an undercurrent of deep, heart-felt emotion which he was struggling to repress, but which would overflow in tremulous tones, in pathetic exclamations, in earnest appeals. Hence language which might have been esteemed harsh and even dreadful, if uttered by another, was tolerated in him, because it was spoken with such evident love and tenderness. "His severest expressions," says one, "were uttered with the moving tenderness of a heart that yearned over the guilt and impending misery of his fellow-men. The wounds he inflicted were the wounds of a friend. Those on whom his strokes fell with deadliest effect could not but feel that benevolence aimed the blow."

In reading Payson's printed sermons, one would not discover the secret of his power.



They are evangelical, clear, pungent, and well written; but there is not condensation of thought; there are no very sharp, pointed sentences, nothing that gives the impression of extraordinary talent. It must have been the spirit of the man which animated and gave electrical power to these discourses. "The thunder-storm could not be printed." The deep, holy fervor evaporated when the attempt was made to put it in type. Such is the testimony of those who sat under his teachings. "You must not judge of him," say they, "by his printed sermons. You should have felt the gush of high spiritual emotion with which they were delivered, and which touched and interested every heart."

All allow that no minister of modern times had greater unction and appropriateness in prayer. Public, extemporaneous prayer it is difficult to offer so as to enlist the sympathies of an accompanying audience. Few excel in it. But Payson did. It was because he lived in the atmosphere of devotion. His soul was half on wing always. It was no forced effort for him to rise. *He* walked with God. God was with him as he entered the pulpit. How easy and how natural for such a man, gifted too with

great command of language, to throw his whole soul into the devotional exercises. People were amazed and awe-struck at the power and pathos of his prayers. He seemed as if talking with God face to face; yet so reverently, with such importunity, with such self-abasement, such naturalness, such childlike confidence, that the listener could not help saying to himself, "Surely God is in this place." Was not his success as a preacher intimately connected with this power of prayer?

There was one characteristic of this good man which tended to interest the minds of his people and to awaken the attention of the careless. It was his ingenuity in devising ways of usefulness, and in carrying them out. His whole aim was to keep things moving in the right direction. The least flagging of zeal on the part of his church was painful to him. He was cast down also if souls were not converted. Every expedient which his generous heart could devise, not inconsistent with Scripture, was brought to bear, for the quickening of his people in duty, and for arousing the attention of the slumber-bound sinner. Some would call him indiscreet. Perhaps he was. To predict a revival in the midst of coldness seemed

so. The moral risk was great. Yet the revival came. Possibly in his own soul there may have been something to justify the announcement. But who, in looking back on the career of this glorious man, would be disposed to criticize his doings? Such a life and such labors ended as we might have expected. Few death scenes have been so bright—have had in and around them so much of heaven. He died exclaiming with his last breath, “Peace, peace! victory, victory!”

## DR. EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN.

IN regard to the distinguished preachers of a past generation who are often referred to in conversation or quoted in discourse, there is naturally excited among later men and ministers a desire to know something of their personal appearance, their peculiarities, and "the hiding of their power." Dr. Griffin is one of this class. Imagine then a man six feet three inches in height, well-proportioned, without being corpulent; with a head covered thickly with hair white as snow; a forehead low, yet firmly set; a large rubicund face; nose disproportionately small; eyes dark, small, and piercing; mouth indicative of refinement; and a countenance, taken altogether, wearing such an expression as great talent and high culture usually develope. His step was slow and measured. Every motion was dignified and in keeping with his lofty stature. Standing in the ecclesiastical assembly, like Saul among his brethren, he was head and shoulders above them all. As he slowly paced up the aisle,

every eye was fixed upon him; and the feeling was, if his preaching corresponds with his height, what a Boanerges he must be! No pulpit was adapted to him. Bibles, cushions, and sometimes even benches, had to be piled up in front for the convenience of the gigantic preacher.

He was a very genial man. His warm, affectionate heart entered sympathizingly into the joys or griefs of others; and never was he more in his element than when, surrounded by his ministerial brethren, and discoursing with them on the interests of Zion, he became the radiant centre of the social circle. His colloquial powers were almost unrivalled, yet he had little of that egotism and lecturing style which characterize certain distinguished divines, and which, while it may display their talents, is sometimes tedious and repulsive.

Dr. Griffin's mind was graded to a high scale, and partook both of the reasoning and the imaginative qualities. Without being a poet, he was at times poetical; and without being a professed dialectician, no man understood better the province and practice of logic. His earlier sermons were marked by the preponderance of the poetical quality. They

might be called flowery. The style was ambitious, and the rhetoric was more conspicuous than the reasoning. But as age and experience gave solemnity to his thoughts, and the revival atmosphere gave intensity to his emotions, his style gradually changed into one of greater simplicity and point, until he became one of the most forcible and pungent preachers in the land. In later life his diction was severely simple, and his sentences full of nervous energy.

He was one who required an occasion to call forth his great powers, and ample time for preparation. He was not a man to be summoned suddenly—not “an off-hand man,” so to speak. He might indeed succeed, but was more likely, in such an emergency, to fail. He was not accustomed always to task his powers. His ordinary discourses were said to be sometimes commonplace, and by no means up to the expectations. But give him time and give him an occasion, and all the slumbering genius would rise and overwhelm with astonishment the listening audience. No man who heard his “plea for Africa,” delivered in the Wall-street church, can ever forget the sublime thoughts and deep emotion of that

memorable occasion. Nor less powerful was the impression when he preached his celebrated sermon on the missionary enterprise. In these discourses are blended the glow of fancy, a deep current of reasoning, and the most tender, touching appeals. They are classics in our pulpit lore.

As might be supposed, Dr. Griffin's manner in the desk was of that chastened, dignified style which propitiates the hearer, and prepares him to listen attentively and seriously to what is said. There was nothing done for effect; no assumed devotion, no measuring with his eye the number or intellectual grade of his audience. He took the pulpit simply to preach Christ, and him crucified. Gravity and seriousness marked every word and gesture. His voice was not deep nor heavy, as, from his great stature, one might have expected. It was smooth, clear, and far-reaching. Every word, uttered with distinctness, fell gratefully and intelligibly on the ear. No matter how large the edifice, the farthest pew had equal advantages with the nearest. It seemed, to one listening, as if that voice had never been tested as to its volume and far-reaching power. It was under the most complete control. The



lowest note was audible, and it swelled with graceful augmentation, until, in its highest pitch, it called forth startling echoes from every wall of the building.

He was an emotional preacher. Though using notes, or rather, a full-written manuscript, "his heart"—to quote one of his own strong expressions—"palpitated on the paper." Nobody seemed to be aware that he was reading. Though the manuscript was before him, yet his whole soul was absorbed in the great thoughts he was uttering, and his eye intent on fixing the full and true impress on the hearts of his hearers. There were certain hymns which he was accustomed to give out, the reading of which, in his peculiar style and intonation, went directly to the heart. His elocution, so far as we could judge, was perfect. Every word and sentiment had its full and natural force. It was a treat to any man of taste and devotional feeling to listen to him as he read the hymn beginning, "Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad." When he struck upon the fourth verse, his voice, tremulous with emotion, fell into a sweet minor, and carried every heart with it as he continued,

“But lo, He leaves those heavenly forms ;  
The Word descends and dwells with clay,  
That He may converse hold with worms,  
Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.”

Whatever he undertook, he threw his whole soul into the work. As a professor at Andover, he was the enthusiastic and successful teacher of sacred elocution. His removal to Boston was under circumstances of deep interest. The icy barriers of rationalism were to be assailed. Some giant arm was needed to do the work. The demand was for powerful mind and muscle. An orthodox fortress, reared in the very centre of lapsed Puritanism, was to be manned and officered; and Dr. Griffin was solicited to lead “the forlorn hope.” He accepted. His fame as a pulpit orator drew many to hear the gospel; and Park-street church became celebrated under the sobriquet of “Brimstone-corner.” At first Unitarians, drawn by his graceful and powerful delivery, endured his scathing rebukes and pungent appeals, tolerating the doctrines for the sake of the eloquent manner in which they were presented. But curiosity once satisfied, they fell back on their preconceived notions, and voted orthodoxy a greater absurdity than

ever. The "Park-street lectures" are a powerful defence of the evangelical doctrine. If they did not convince Unitarians, they at least confirmed the orthodox and strengthened some who had been wavering.

But he was not at home, after all, in the Puritan city. He found that so intense and long-continued a hatred of the doctrines of grace, on the part of the rich and influential, had created a popular aversion to these doctrines which all his powerful efforts could not overcome. Still, to this day his faithfulness is spoken of with warm approval, and his eloquence has left a sweet savor that hangs around the Park-street corner, like the scent of flowers around the vase in which they were displayed.

We cannot close our sketch without adverting to a peculiar charm of his preaching, as characterized by the *revival* spirit. He was greatly blessed in his pastorate at Newark and elsewhere with powerful effusions of the Holy Spirit. No minister entered more warmly into these harvest seasons. He knew how to bring the great truths of the gospel with overwhelming yet tender force on the unawakened and awakened conscience. He loved to

lead the burdened sinner to the foot of the cross, and there weep with him and pray with him until the tears of penitence were succeeded by the smiles of hope and joy. At length this good man and great preacher succumbed to the power of disease, and went to heaven as calmly as the sun sets in a clear autumnal evening.

## REV. ROBERT HALL.

By the death of this great preacher in February, 1831, one of the brightest lights of the British pulpit was extinguished. His eloquence, partaking the qualities of the two great masters and exemplars of the Grecian and Roman school, had no superior then, and is not likely to have any hereafter. In his peculiarities as a pulpit orator he was alone, and stood out in strong relief. Others may have made a greater impression on promiscuous audiences, but none have gone down deeper in the reflective and cultivated British mind. Gifted with an intellect of innate strength and precocious development—reading and relishing “Edwards on the Will” at eleven years of age—with an imagination soaring to the utmost heights and diving to the utmost depths, this incomparable man chose to exert his powers in the noblest of callings and to disport his imagination on the sublimest of themes. In his early training he was favored with ample literary advantages, first at the British Academy, and afterwards at King’s college, Aberdeen.

While at the former, though a mere stripling, he was urged prematurely into the pulpit, in order to try his gifts. The trial came near depriving the world of his brilliant services. Proceeding in his discourse for a few moments, he suddenly covered his face with his hands, and exclaimed, "All my ideas are fled." Still more mortified was he at a second failure; when, hastening from the pulpit to his closet, he said, "If this don't humble me, the devil must have me." Doubtless it did humble him; and after a more thorough mental discipline at Aberdeen, he entered the pulpit under better auspices—"a workman that needed not to be ashamed." At King's college he moved through the course of study with all the ease and enthusiasm of a practised competitor. There it was he became intimate with Sir James McIntosh, and the two—*par nobile fratrum*—in their walks and talks discussed all the profoundest philosophers from Locke to Browne, each acquiring by this intellectual gladiatorship a power that subserved him in after-life—the one as a lawyer and statesman, the other as the peerless pulpit orator and defender of the orthodox faith.

Mr. Hall's appearance was striking. He

possessed an athletic and well-proportioned figure, eyes of uncommon lustre, expressive of sharp wit and lofty intellect, unassuming modesty, winning frankness of manner, and an enthusiasm that readily kindled and communicated its fire to others. As he grew older, the forehead—a calm, majestic pile—was denuded towards the crown, giving additional force and dignity to the whole countenance. He had an unconquerable aversion to having his likeness taken; but it was secured clandestinely while preaching. His friends hung it in his study over night, and watched the effect. In the morning he discovered it. Scrutinizing the picture for a while, he placed his hand midway over the face, and said to himself—such is the story—“The upper part, forehead and eyes, angelic; the lower, mouth and chin, Satanic.” Dr. Gregory says it was the most speaking countenance he ever contemplated, animated by eyes radiating with the brilliancy imparted to them by benevolence, wit, and intellectual energy.

His manner in the pulpit was affected somewhat by the life-long malady which he endured. Extreme pain in the back, diverging from the spine over the nervous texture of the whole body, made it necessary for him to use narcot-



ics, and to study for the most part in a recumbent posture. Yet this very malady may have roused his intellectual energies to the highest pitch, and given impulse to a mind which, under ordinary circumstances, might not have reached such a height of unequalled grandeur. Many times he rose from the couch of pain to perform the required duties of the pulpit, and his friends could discern the suppressed agony as he struggled on in the service. Hence at the beginning he seemed to lack power. His voice was feeble, requiring the utmost stillness in order to catch the opening sentences. These were generally simple, and interrupted by a spasmodic cough, which to strangers augured disappointment; but like the mettlesome steed that prances a while and then rushes forward with a bound, so the orator began soon to show signs of a strong onward movement. His voice gathered strength, lost its huskiness, rolled out in augmented volume, while the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" came glowing brighter and brighter, until every auditor was chained and led captive by an almost superhuman eloquence.

"He could at pleasure," says his friend and biographer, "adopt the unadorned, the

ornamental, or the energetic, and indeed combine them in every diversity of modulation. In his higher flights, what he said of Burke might, with the slightest deduction, be applied to himself, that 'his imperial fancy laid all nature under tribute, and collected riches from every scene of the creation and every walk of art;' and at the same time that could be affirmed of Mr. Hall which could not be affirmed of Burke, that he never fatigued and oppressed by gaudy and superfluous imagery. As he advanced to his practical applications, all his mental powers were shown in the most palpalble but finely balanced exercise. His mind would, if I may so speak, collect itself and come forth with a luminous activity, proving as he advanced how vast, and in some important senses, how next to irresistible those powers were. In such seasons his preaching communicated universal animation. His congregation would seem to partake of his spirit, to think and feel as he did, to be fully influenced by the presence of the objects which he set before them, fully actuated by the motives which he had enforced with such energy and pathos.

"From the commencement of his discourse an almost breathless silence prevailed, deeply

impressive and solemnizing from its singular intenseness. Not a sound was heard but that of the preacher's voice, scarcely an eye but was fixed upon him, not a countenance that he did not watch and read and interpret, as he surveyed them again and again with his rapid, ever-excursive glance. As he advanced and increased in animation, five or six of the auditors would be seen to rise and lean forward over the front of their pews, still keeping their eyes upon him. Some new or striking sentiment or expression would cause others to rise in like manner; shortly afterwards, still more; and so on, until, before the close of the sermon, it often happened that a considerable portion of the congregation were seen standing, every eye directed to the preacher, yet now and then for a moment glancing from one to another, thus transmitting and reciprocating thought and feeling. Mr. Hall himself, conscious of the whole, received new animation, reflecting it back upon those who were already alive to the inspiration, until all that were susceptible of thought and emotion seemed wound up to the utmost limit of elevation on earth, when he would close and they reluctantly and slowly resume their seats."

Preaching on the text, "Dead in trespasses and sins," so powerful were the concluding appeals of the preacher, that Dr. Ryland, in whose church he was officiating, rushed up the pulpit stairs, and with tears trickling down his cheeks, cried out, "Let all that are alive in Jerusalem pray for the dead, that they may live." His manner of preparing his sermons was peculiar. He seldom wrote them out. At first, or in the early part of his ministry, about a third was written, and the rest, under the impulse of the occasion, flowed out extemporaneously. Subsequently his notes were more brief, and his sermons were distinguished by greater simplicity and pathos. But he had the rare talent of putting down in his memory trains of thought and illustrations of varied beauty and sublimity, so that what seemed to be impromptu was the result of careful study and meditation. He could think out the very sentences and all the appropriate words, and reproduce them at the given moment, so that their correctness suggested previous writing, and their natural and easy enunciation implied the perfection of extemporaneous address. He used to say that generally he premeditated the order and the train of thought, which he called

cutting channels for the onflowing current, and then trusted to the occasion for the appropriate language.

It was with difficulty he could be induced to give any of his sermons to the press. He disliked the necessary revision. He had formed to himself also so high a standard of style, that his actual attainments, as compared with his *beau ideal*, disgusted him. Through dint of effort, those noble discourses which we have were wrung out of him. That on practical atheism—one of the sublimest compositions of modern times—was kept on the tapis for weeks, the author lying on his back and dictating a few sentences at a time, altering and reconstructing them, adding this and taking back that, until, after the patience of publisher and printer was well-nigh worn out, it reached the long-desired *finis*. But it is worth a thousand times more pains than were taken to obtain it. “It places Hall’s reputation,” says Gregory, “upon an eminence which it will probably retain as long as purity and elevation of style, deeply philosophical views of the springs and motives of action, and correct theological sentiments, are duly appreciated in the world.”

The sermon entitled, “Sentiments Proper

to the Present Crisis," preached to the Bristol Guards during the threatened invasion of Napoleon, is regarded as unequalled for the eloquent peroration. The last ten pages were thought by many, and by Mr. Pitt among the number, to be fully equal, in genuine eloquence, to any passage of the same length that can be selected from either ancient or modern orators. The discourse also on the death of the Princess Charlotte is a beautiful tissue of philosophy interwoven with religious sentiment, expressing in the most tender and touching style the vanity impressed on the highest earthly station, and the deep sympathy one feels in seeing "youth and beauty and regal expectations all suddenly eclipsed in the darkness of death." "In felicity of diction, in delicacy and pathos, in the rich variety of the most instructive trains of thought, in the masterly combination of what in eloquence, philosophy, and religion was best calculated to make a permanent and salutary impression, this sermon probably stands unrivalled."

John Foster has considered Mr. Hall's character as a preacher in a long article, written with candor and with that critical acumen for which the essayist was distinguished. While

conceding his unparalleled powers as a pulpit orator, he thinks nevertheless that Mr. Hall's greatness lay in a complete and thorough intellectuality, which, without regard to immediate impression, seized the great points of his subject, illustrated them in the most impressive manner, and rising by gradations, closed in an explosion of great and overwhelming thoughts. Foster's objection was, that the orator, absorbed in his subject, lost sight in some measure of his hearers; that the idea of direct conviction was not as prominent as it should have been. He admits, however, that at times Hall carried the moral artillery into the business and bosoms of his hearers, and that when he did so, no preacher whom he ever heard had greater power. He allows also that no man seemed less to court admiration. His whole air and manner suggested the oblivion of self. "The preacher appeared wholly absorbed in his subject—given up to its possession as the single actuating principle and impulse. What a contrast to divers showy and admired orators! For who has not witnessed a pulpit exhibition, which unwittingly told that the speaker was to be himself as prominent at the least as his sacred theme? Who has not observed the



glimmer of a self-complacent smile partly reflected, as it were, on his visage from the plausible visages confronting him, and partly lighted from within by the blandishment of a still warmer admirer?" Mr. Hall's example was the reverse of all this. There was no studied adjustment—nothing which seemed intended to attract applause. "His most splendid passages glistened or lasted for a moment, and were gone."

His death made a vacuum which it can scarcely be expected will be filled. "The removal," says Foster, "of any worthy minister, while in full possession and activity of his powers, is a mournful occurrence; but there is the consideration that many such remain, and that perhaps an equal may follow, where the esteemed instructor is withdrawn. But the feeling in the present instance is of a loss altogether irreparable. The cultivated portion of the hearers have a sense of privation partaking of desolateness. While ready to give due honor to all valuable preachers, and knowing that the lights of religious instruction will still shine with useful lustre and new ones continually arise, they involuntarily and pensively turn to look at the last fading colors in the distance where the great luminary has set."

## DR. THOMAS CHALMERS.

WHILE Robert Hall was lighting up the ecclesiastical firmament in England by the blaze of his eloquence, another genius—different, but not less illustrious—was scattering his auroral illuminations upon the northern sky. Thomas Chalmers had scarcely a peer among Scotland's illustrious divines. He was in his day the man of mark, exerting more influence in the pulpit and in the professional chair than any other individual. To have heard Chalmers preach was a thing to be talked of and remembered. Strangers visiting Edinburgh regarded this privilege as the culminating point of interest. When he preached in London there was no edifice large enough to accommodate the multitudes, including dignitaries of the church, peers of the realm, and every class and description of the populace. Yet he himself was one of the most simple-minded and modest of men. True greatness is set off by these contrasts. The truth is, such men as Chalmers and Hall seem to have in

their mental vision so vast a boundary of possible attainments, that, like Newton, they regard their acquisitions but as pebbles on the ocean-strand of knowledge.

At first, Chalmers attempted to unite the philosopher with the minister. He was as much concerned in his botanical excursions as he was in developing the moral virtues of his parishioners. But the grace of God touching and transforming the inner man, the botany and the philosophy were laid on the altar of sacrifice, and henceforth he knew nothing among men but the higher sphere of evangelical truth.

The fame of such a man could not be restricted to the little parish of Kilmany, which was his first field of labor when a young man. A delegation from Glasgow having caught the rumor of his celebrity, and being in pursuit of a candidate for the Tron church, went to Kilmany to hear him. He preached that Sunday from a plank extended out of the church window at Bendochy, as the crowd was too great to be accommodated within the building. It was a funeral sermon in behalf of his brave comrade Rev. John Hovey, who had sacrificed his own life in desperate efforts to save a ship-

wrecked company. Chalmers' whole soul was drawn out on the occasion, and the delegation returned in raptures and reported accordingly. Kilmany lost and Glasgow gained the greatest of Scotland's pulpit orators. But Chalmers, like many others who have been seduced from the sweet retirement of rural life, was never so happy amid the throng and pressure of admiring crowds as when ministering to his humble Kilmany flock. Many backward glances cast he on that dearly loved field of his early labors.

His popularity in Glasgow was so great as to become not only exhausting, but at times almost intolerable. It insulated him, in a great measure, from his ministerial brethren. It made exchange of pulpits next to impossible, while at the same time it subjected him to constant and vexatious interruptions. To use his own simile, he was "like a man with his head in the clouds and his feet on the shifting sands." But such are the penalties of genius, and such the trials of excessive popularity.

When Dr. Chalmers went to Glasgow he was in the full vigor of his physical and intellectual manhood. His appearance was striking, but unique. Strong built and very mus-

cular, his forehead was broad and high, with black hair carelessly overshadowing it. His eyes were set far apart, with drooping upper lids, and that portion of the nose which divided them was unusually full. His eyebrows were thick, and beneath them lay those indescribable orbs, which in repose possessed a slumbrous intelligence, but which, in the heated march of mind, when the latent fires began to glow, put on an overpowering brilliancy. "The eyes themselves," says one taking a verbal daguerreotype of him, "are light in color, and have a strange, dreamy heaviness, which conveys any idea rather than that of dulness, but which contrasts in a wonderful manner with the dazzling watery glare they exhibit when expanded in their sockets and illuminated into all their flame and fervor in some moment of high entranced enthusiasm. The upper lip, from the nose downward, is separated by a very deep line, which gives a sort of leonine firmness of expression to all the lower part of the face. The checks are square and strong; in texture, like pieces of marble." All this strong, rugged aspect, however, grew softened with age; and the portrait which the writer secured in Glasgow, taken after he was sixty,

has a sweet and touching pensiveness, combined with a certain intellectual majesty, illustrative both of the greatness and goodness of the original. His daughter, whom I visited at "Morning Side," pronounced it an admirable likeness.

In regard to Dr. Chalmers' manner of delivery, all unite in asserting that it would not stand the test of oratorical criticism. If it was forcible, it certainly was not graceful. It set at defiance all the rules of the rhetorician. In the beginning of his discourse the auditor was disappointed. Indeed there was a feeling as if the speaker would actually break down at the outset. "His voice," says one, "is neither strong nor melodious ; his gestures are neither easy nor graceful ; his pronunciation is not only broadly national, but broadly provincial. But of a truth, these are things which no listener can attend to while this great preacher stands before him armed with all the weapons of the most commanding eloquence, and swaying all around him with its imperial rule. At first, indeed, there is nothing to make one suspect what riches are in store. There is an appearance of constraint about him that affects and distresses you. You are afraid that his

breast is weak, and that even the slight exertion he makes may be too much for it. But then with what tenfold richness does this dim preliminary curtain make the glories of his eloquence shine forth when the heated spirit at length shakes from its chill, confining fetters, and bursts out, elate and rejoicing, in the full splendor of its disimprisoned wings."

His visit to London in 1817 created an excitement deeper and more general than had been witnessed since the days of Whitefield. His principal discourse on that occasion was in behalf of the London Missionary Society, delivered in Surry chapel. The audience was immense and of the most intelligent class. Expectations were high. The fame of this great pulpit orator had preceded him. Old Rowland Hill stood up before the pulpit, with his hands resting on the top of the pew, and his eye fixed on the preacher. As usual, the first efforts were awkward, the voice feeble, the accent broadly Scotch, and the whole aspect of things disheartening. The cold sweat stood on Hill's face. "It is a failure," said he to himself. But in a few moments the ponderous machinery began to move with more regularity and greater speed. Sentence after



sentence rolled forth in that majestic strain peculiar to Chalmers. Old Rowland's eyes began to glisten. The anxiety passed from his brow. Soon his whole soul was collected in his face as he watched the onward march of that gigantic intellect. By and by one of those corruscations of genius, so peculiar to the speaker, was thrown off, which set the whole audience in a blaze, and Hill, no longer able to contain himself, brought his two hands down upon the rail, exclaiming in audible tones, "Well done, Chalmers!"

"I write," says one describing the scene, "under the nervousness of having heard and witnessed the most astonishing display of human talent that perhaps ever commanded sight or hearing. Dr. Chalmers has just finished his discourse before the Missionary Society. All my expectations were overwhelmed in the triumph of it." "All the world," writes Wilberforce, "is wild about Chalmers. Vast crowds of the nobility attend. I was surprised to see how greatly Canning was affected. At times he was quite melted into tears. He is reported to have said, that although at first he felt uneasy in consequence of Dr. Chalmers' manner and accent, yet that he had never been so

arrested by any oratory. 'The Tartan,' said he, 'beats us all.'"

How are we to account for such an overwhelming effect in view of the impediments alluded to? There must have been an indescribable charm somewhere—a magnetic influence in the spirit of the man, that impregnated those lofty and long-drawn sentences with a life and power that swayed all hearts and led captive all intellects. There was a correspondence between his peculiar style of writing and the fervid oratory through which it flowed out upon the audience. The writing was not less unique than the delivery. Who would undertake to read Chalmers' sermons from the pulpit? Who has chest enough and breath enough to give full force to thoughts that roll out by dependent sentences until they stretch, ere they reach a period, over an entire printed page? He struck out a new path for his great genius to travel in. All classical models are set at defiance. His ideas, which were grand and glowing, could not be cramped by ordinary rhetorical rules. So he took that style which gave scope to them. The majestic march of his periods is truly wonderful. There is a sort of poetical rhythm about them. One is

fascinated and allured on, as if traversing a flowery and fragrant road that leads to some high castellated tower or luminous mountain summit, where the prospect is both varied and boundless. We give ourselves up to the magical power of his eloquent diction. We take hold of the golden chain which he offers us, and which develops link after link, until it binds the intellect and the imagination in a willing bondage. There is no writer who seizes you with a firmer hand, or holds you more spell-bound, until he fixes in your mind the ideas which he is illustrating. Generally there is unity in the thought, but endless variety in the illustrations. He carries out the principle that a sermon should have one grand culminating point; and that every thing said, every process of reasoning employed, every figure used, should tend to develop and give force to this ruling idea. He has been found fault with for ringing so many changes upon one thought. Some have compared it to a door swinging on its hinges, complaining that there was not enough onward movement. Others have compared his sermons to a kaleidoscope, where the same materials, by a turn of the instrument, exhibit new and beautiful com-

binations. But it is useless to criticize, when it is known and conceded that no pulpit orator had greater sway over intelligent minds than Thomas Chalmers. In regard to style and oratory, he called no man master. Both his thoughts and the mode of giving them utterance are his own. They are simply Chalmersian.

His sermons and discourses, as merely read, carry one along in a feeling of ecstatic pleasure, prompting the expression occasionally, "How splendid!" What then must it have been to sit and listen to the author, when, under a full appreciation of the sentiments, he poured forth in glowing periods the high and holy thoughts, until the whole audience-chamber was lighted up as with a sort of intellectual conflagration. "Of all human compositions," says one, "there is none surely that loses so much as a sermon does when it is made to address itself to the eye of a solitary student in his closet, and not to the thrilling ears of a mighty mingled congregation through the very voice which nature has enriched with notes more expressive than words can ever be, of the meanings and feelings of its author. Neither perhaps did the world ever possess

any orator whose minutest peculiarities of gesture and voice have more power in increasing the effect of what he says, than do those of Dr. Chalmers. Most unquestionably I have never heard either in England or Scotland, or in any other country, any preacher whose eloquence is capable of producing an effect so strong and irresistible as his."

As this sketch is designed to present Dr. Chalmers simply as an eloquent preacher, we refrain from the consideration of his practical philanthropy. His heart was as full of goodness as was his intellect of greatness; and Scotland might with as much propriety erect a monument for him as for the great novelist. But Chalmers needs "no storied urn nor animated bust" to perpetuate his memory. He will live in the hearts of the good and great so long as time shall last; and when time shall be no more, his name will be found emblazoned on the records of immortality.

## REV. HENRY MELVILL, LONDON.

MELVILL, without doubt, stands preëminent as an evangelical preacher. His celebrity has a firm basis, not likely to be undermined by the shifting opinions and prejudices of the populace. The physical man may and must succumb to the increasing infirmities of age, but as yet, though apparently near seventy, he seems to possess all the animation and vigor of his earlier ministry. His fame has gone forth on the four winds, and everywhere, even in distant countries, he is spoken of as a noble representative of the evangelical portion of the English national church. Those who have not heard him have access to his published sermons, and we in America owe a debt of gratitude to Bishop McIlvaine for the reprint of a most interesting collection of his discourses on the various topics of Christian duty and doctrine. In the printed page he appears great, and the impress of sanctified genius glows in every sentence, and makes his writings the delight of all whose hearts are in sympathy with God's truth. But there is nothing

like the oral annunciation—the truth as it falls from lips touched with hallowed fire. To feel the full force of his sentiments, one must seat himself under this great master of eloquent utterances, and allow him unresisted sway over the imagination, the intellect, and the heart.

When I came to sit under Melvill, all my preconceived notions of the truly eloquent preacher found a realization in his simple, forcible, and natural mode of writing and speaking. His style is admirably adapted to convey, clearly and forcibly, gospel truth. It has not the magnificent drapery of Chalmers, nor the measured march of Massillon's periods. It partakes of the virtues of both, without the faults of either. It is pure Saxon baptized in a classical font, having the strength of the Greek and the beauty of the Roman.

As a lecturer in St. Margaret's, an opportunity was enjoyed almost every week of hearing him on Tuesday at eleven o'clock. Availing myself of this information, I proceeded at the appointed hour to the place of worship. This lecture is an institution of long standing, and is accompanied with lucrative perquisites. The position of the church, in the



very focus of commercial life, under almost the shadow of the Bank of England, and surrounded by merchants and money-changers, offers to the sons of traffic an opportunity to let the treasure from heaven break in upon their visions of earthly gain. And many of them avail themselves of the privilege. Leaving for an hour their offices and accounts current, they hasten, at the tolling of the bell, to recreate their higher nature under the eloquent droppings of the sanctuary.

Passing on with the crowd, I found a seat in the old-fashioned church, and cast my eyes about to see the audience, and to search for him especially whose presence was the attractive centre. The congregation was highly respectable, composed more of men than of women, and having a very serious as well as intelligent look. In the desk was stationed a gowned official, who promptly began the service. Was this Melvill? It could not be. He was too young. His reading was bad. His whole air was that of a very common man. Was I to be disappointed? It could hardly be, methought, as I saw this crowd evidently under the excitement of high expectation. In the chancel, as it is called, I ob-

served a fine, venerable figure, with prayer-book in hand, uttering loudly but solemnly the responses. That man, thought I, personates my previous idea of the great preacher. He seemed about sixty-five. His hair was quite gray, almost white. His features might be called coarse. But this was more in the shape than in the expression, which was that of a man of high culture and disciplined passions. If nature had given his countenance a somewhat coarse mould, grace had softened every feature into a subdued and attractive gentleness. His eyes were not bright nor very expressive in repose, and the lids drooping over them gave a pensive expression, which rather interested you.

When the reader had concluded, and the hymn had been sung, this venerable man ascended the sacred desk, and assumed the attitude of devotion. I knew then that I was not to be disappointed. Melvill it was whom I had heard uttering the responses. Stillness reigned, deep, unbroken, with every eye turned to one spot. Speaker and auditor felt the heart beat more quickly, and that silence was premonitory of the thunder peals that were soon to break upon us.

He began by saying that as this was the last public service which he should render for several weeks to come, and that in the mysterious movements of Providence, it was possible that neither he nor they might meet again in the relation of preacher and hearer, he had been casting about for a text which should be the foundation of a pertinent valedictory, and which should embrace some one of the great truths on which our salvation depends. He had selected the following: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

After a brief introduction, striking but simple, he went on to illustrate the great principle contained in the passage—that without regeneration, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, nothing, in the way of professed obedience, could be acceptable to God. This he did, first by conceding to the unrenewed man all the amiable, patriotic, and philanthropic traits which were claimed for him. It was done in a masterly manner, developing a deep knowledge of human nature. Then as he proceeded to bring up this assumed excellence and measure it by the requirements of the law and the gospel, how keen and searching was his analysis. Not only was every eye

fixed, but every heart began to palpitate. We felt as if he were marching us up to the judgment bar. Those covered orbs began to show themselves: the curtains began to lift, and a fire to flash out upon us, while the deep tones of his voice rang, trumpet-like, throughout the house. His sentences were sometimes short and terribly sharp. There was a great condensation. It came like quick claps of thunder. We were more than awe-struck. In some parts we were ready to exclaim, Hold—enough. But as he drew towards the close, the storm seemed to subside, and the bow of mercy spanned the dark, retiring cloud. Lifting those eyes and hands towards heaven, in a tender and tremulous voice, he cried, “Oh, holy and blessed Spirit, come from thy throne of light and love, and soften and subdue and transform these souls of ours, taking away the heart of stone, and giving us the heart of flesh.”

From this specimen I was satisfied that the reputation of Melvill had not been overstated. He must take rank with the foremost of his profession. His delivery is rapid, yet distinct. He makes few or no gestures. He just puts his soul into the discourse, and goes on with a

progressive earnestness and animation that electrifies the whole assembly. What a blessing it is to the Established church to have prominent among her ministry a man of so much taste, intellect, and piety—a man who unites apparently much of the zeal of Paul, with the eloquence of an Apollos.

The discourse which I heard was, I have no doubt, one of his best, and was delivered in his best manner. The circumstance of its being the last of the season, the apparent care with which it had been composed, the deep feeling under which he gave it utterance, all conspired to render it such. But it is said that all these lectures are prepared with great labor, and as they are immediately given to the general public through the press, the author takes care that they shall be as perfect as it is in his power to make them. No minister in Great Britain exerts, through the pulpit and the press, a wider and more evangelical influence than the lecturer of St. Margaret's. We shall hold in grateful remembrance the occasion above alluded to, and the opportunity of listening to this unsurpassed pulpit orator.

## REV. ROWLAND HILL.

THE name of Rowland Hill is almost as well known and as wide spread as that of George Whitefield. The latter, like the Apocalyptic angel, flew on strong wing from continent to continent, while Hill confined his labors to the land of his birth. Within that sphere, however, no minister acquired and maintained a greater sway over the popular mind. He was heard by the common people gladly. And yet it was not an unusual sight to see the star and the ribbon glittering among the plainly clad auditors of Surrey Chapel.

Had Rowland Hill sprung from the plebeian ranks, instead of being connected with aristocratic circles, it may be questionable whether his fame would have stood out in such bold relief. It was owing in part to the fact that his father was a baronet of high standing, while several of his relations occupied honorable positions in civil and military life, that he, the clerical member of the family, took a higher and more conspicuous stand than if no such collateral advantages had existed. He pos-

sessed too an ample fortune, which raised him to an independent position, and enabled him to enjoy the blessedness of giving more than he received. But aside from all this, Rowland Hill was a man of genius, a minister of the apostolical stamp, and an orator who could sway an audience almost as the wind sways the bending reed.

He entered the ministry in early life; and his first efforts at preaching, made in the neighborhood of his own home, gave such promise as led his father to acquiesce in the decision which young Hill had made, to devote his life to the great work of preaching the gospel.

He was a tall, straight, noble-looking young man. His features were Wellingtonian, so to speak, having a prominent Roman nose, and a small but speaking eye. "His countenance," says one, "was expressive of the complexion of his mind; and the play upon his lips and the piercing look of his small gray eyes denoted both intelligence and humor. When between fifty and sixty years of age, his fine, upright figure, combined with a high-bred, gentleman-like deportment, caused him to be the subject of general admiration."

His voice had great compass, and he could



vary its volume or expression to suit the sentiment. He was a man of strong, but well-regulated passions, easily and deeply excited; and when the topic justified their development, as when he delivered the terrors of the law, it seemed almost as if he was brandishing the thunderbolts of heaven. Yet no man had less severity in his *heart*, whatever apparent severity there might occasionally have been in his *manner*. His sensibilities were almost as tender as those of woman, and his eyes more frequently wept than flashed, and his tones were oftener subduing than startling. In fact, the love of Christ was the theme upon which he loved most and longest to dwell. He led his auditors oftener to Calvary than to Sinai; and the pictures of softest and tenderest beauty which he drew, were those in which the cross was the central figure.

Rowland Hill was a connecting link between the era of Whitefield's power and that of Hall and Chalmers, having in his younger years sat at the feet of the former, and in his old age looked with admiring wonder on the two great pulpit orators of England and of Scotland; but his own style and manner were modelled after Whitefield's. The mantle of Whitefield

seemed in fact to have fallen more upon Hill than upon any other man. To him Whitefield was the imaginative type of all ministerial excellence, and he strained every nerve to get as near to his eloquent standard as possible. Some traits he had which reminded the hearers of Whitefield. His voice, so strong and varied; the power of illustration, so pertinent and striking; the apt manner of seizing on passing events and circumstances, and weaving them at once into his discourse; his entire consecration, together with his intense love of souls, and his almost superhuman labors for their conversion; his deep feeling, choking his utterance and filling his eyes with tears; his bursts of sublime eloquence, carrying the audience away as with a tempest: all these features of the man and of the orator justified the popular decision that *he*, more than any minister, had a right to the mantle of the departed Whitefield.

Rowland Hill has been censured for indulging in the pulpit his propensity for humor. Nature had endowed him with this faculty in a high degree. It was almost impossible not to allow it some influence; and it may be questionable whether, under a reasonable restraint,

it be not an important element in pulpit eloquence. Certain it is that it tends to awaken an interest in a class of hearers who might otherwise remain listless, and to catch the attention when, under the constant pressure of solemn truths, it might seek for relief from other and worldly associations. Says one, "He had naturally a keen sense of the ludicrous, which seemed at times to spread its influence over the entire surface of his mind. Like a vapory cloud floating across the face of a luminary of the heavens, some comic idea would dim for an instant the lustre of his higher conceptions; but on its passing away suddenly, his imagination shone forth in all its splendor, and generally led him into the opposite expressions of pathos and sublimity."

Rowland Hill's sermons were almost entirely extemporaneous. Having chosen his text with a view to set in a forcible light some great doctrinal or practical truth, he had the faculty of arranging with wonderful rapidity the divisions and illustrations of the discourse. This he could do at a moment's warning. In fact, some of his happiest efforts and his most powerful discourses were from texts selected in the pulpit or suggested by some unexpected

circumstance. On such occasions his arrangement of thought was as quick as his utterance was ready. He depended on the presence of an audience to fire up his own soul, and to create that electrical sympathy which is so essential to the power and success of an orator. He held that men wanted rousing and exciting to the performance of duties which they acknowledged obligatory—that there was more need of earnest appeal than of calm instruction; and so he filled his quiver with shafts, whose burning tips he sent with a strong arm against the panoplied bosoms of the impenitent.

Another feature of his eloquence was, that it was all natural—the warm outpourings of unsophisticated feeling. Says his biographer, “The great secret perhaps of the amazing effect of his preaching was its being all *nature*. He generally chose the subject which impressed and affected his own mind, and discoursed on it as he *felt*, not as he had previously thought; and thus, on every occasion, whether joyous or grievous, he found his way to hearts whose strings vibrated in unison with those of his own. Sheridan used to say of him, ‘I go to hear Rowland Hill, because his ideas come red-hot from the heart.’”

But there was still another trait as prominent as his naturalness—*his boldness*. Every listener was struck with it. He neither courted the favor nor feared the opposition of men. He could preach with calm composure under the threatenings of bigoted ecclesiastics or the terrible mutterings of mob violence. If royalty itself had mingled among his hearers, he would not have deviated from the strict line of evangelical truth. Describing the different styles of preachers, among others he speaks of the *bold* manner; that is, “the man who preaches what he feels, without fear or diffidence.” To no minister would this more emphatically apply than to himself.

True it is, Mr. Hill’s social position and his large fortune raising him above the temptation to secure by conciliation the favor of any class of hearers, made the exercise of this virtue perhaps less self-denying than if he had drawn his support from titled patrons or from voluntary contributions. Still, we must admire the heroic stand which he took and maintained when, to preach the great truths of the gospel, as he habitually did, in open fields and in unsteeped chapels, rendered him the object of sneers in high life, and sometimes of per-

sonal abuse by the mob. But he outlived all this; and the clouds which gathered portentous over his early ministry, and which settled so black occasionally on his mid-day career, after having discharged their harmless thunders, passed away, leaving his evening days all luminous with a full-orbed reputation. After a long and eventful life, nearly the whole of which was devoted to preaching Christ and winning souls to his cross, he sunk gradually under the weight of almost fivescore years, leaving behind him a character as remarkable for unsullied purity as it was for matchless eloquence and for practical benevolence.

## REV. LEGH RICHMOND.

LEGH RICHMOND's name and fame are associated with a precious volume entitled, "Annals of the Poor." "The Dairyman's Daughter" and "The Young Cottager" are portraits of such moral beauty as to attract all Christian hearts, and place them under obligations to the celebrated limner. He has combined in these sketches both the skill and enthusiasm of the true artist. Every thing is so simple, so fresh, so beautiful. Elizabeth Wallbridge calls out the young pastor of Brading, and from her lonely cot, teaches him how to minister to the poor of Christ's flock. She asks him to accompany her on her brightening path, and bids him an affectionate farewell at the gate of death. Little Jane, "the Young Cottager," with the sweetest modesty sits at his feet, learns the way to heaven, and then walks on to its golden gates, which she soon reaches; when, throwing her arms about Mr. Richmond's neck, she bids him farewell, and expires on his bosom.

Here he took his first lesson in the divine



and holy work of feeding the lambs of Christ's flock, watching their heavenward progress, and smoothing the rough pathway, until they were safe in the arms of "the good Shepherd."

These scenes transpired in the Isle of Wight, that gem in the diadem of England's landscape beauties. Richmond's young genius nestled and was nurtured in this island, where the ocean lay all around in its magnificence, and the hills and valleys, by nature beautiful, were by the hand of skill and culture converted into an almost earthly paradise. As the writer has traversed this ground, and stood in its sacred places, he is prepared to endorse the faithful transcript of natural beauties so vividly described by the pastor of Brading.

When Legh Richmond's genius was fully fledged, it took a wider sphere and soared to a loftier height. As the minister of Turvey, where for a quarter of a century he labored, he achieved an influence which was felt for good, not only in his own parochial sphere, but throughout the kingdom, and even far and wide over all Christendom. We propose to look at him on the more general field, where his peculiar talents as a popular preacher were called into requisition.

It was something new in his day to find a minister of the Established church breaking away from the rigid custom of a cool and careful reading of sermons to the free and fervid extemporaneous style of preaching. Richmond began to try his wings in this way in the little church of Yaverland, of which he had the oversight. His first effort was a failure ; but trying again, he succeeded, and ever after he gave free scope to his noble faculties, unfettered by even paper bonds.

His talents were well adapted to this mode of preaching. He had an easy fluency, a fine voice, and a vivid fancy. He seized upon truth with a strong grasp, and held it up in a clear, convincing light. After his soul had really tasted of the water of life, which, according to his own account, took place subsequent to his ordination, he seemed to live and move in an atmosphere almost as bright and beaming as that in which angels dwell.

His preaching was in a high degree *scriptural*. It found its impulse and its aliment in the living word ; and so familiar had he become with the truths of the gospel, that every sermon seemed to combine the essentials of salvation. Still his sermons were not a mo-

notonous chain of texts, but were more like the tissue of a regal robe, through which run, in graceful patterns, the threads of silver and of gold.

His rich fancy gave a coloring of beauty to his style, and made it as attractive as it was instructive. This faculty, apart from a deep religious sensibility, is of doubtful utility when employed in the illustration of gospel truth. It may run into mere word pictures, and the pictures so drawn, while they enhance the reputation of the preacher, may not convey much real benefit to the hearer; but when, as in this case, the fancy is under the control of deep religious feeling—when this feeling so blends itself with the picture as to impart a natural warmth, it may become a most powerful means of awakening the attention and moving the heart.

That Mr. Richmond possessed both fancy and deep religious sensibility, all those who were privileged to hear him readily admit. Said one, and he a minister, "As a public speaker he possessed a felicity of idea and expression peculiar to himself. His thoughts were natural and simple. They seemed to flow without effort, and to be the spontaneous

production of his mind; but his rich imagination clothed them in a form that resembled the varied tints, the brilliant glow, and the harmonious coloring of the rainbow. His images were frequently borrowed from the scenes of nature, which were made to illustrate some instructive and spiritual truth. The lofty mountain and the verdant vale, the tranquil rivulet, or the broad expanse of the ocean, all became tributary, and supplied materials to his creative fancy. He could affect the heart by touches the most natural and by appeals the most pathetic."

Speaking of his death, this writer remarks, "Thousands and tens of thousands who have hung with admiration, affection, and interest on his eloquent addresses from the pulpit and the platform will unite in the sentiment that a great man has fallen. The sermons of Legh Richmond were characterized not only by a depth of piety and a sound orthodoxy, but likewise by the most pathetic and affectionate appeals to his auditors on the subject of personal religion. His addresses in behalf of religious societies were marked by extraordinary powers of description, by a pathos which deeply interested and affected his audience,

and by an eloquence peculiar to himself, which must have been witnessed to be duly appreciated."

It was Mr. Richmond's custom to make excursions over the kingdom, preaching and collecting for the benevolent associations then just springing into existence, whose origin and influence were closely connected with the Christian genius of this good man. The British and Foreign Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, the Society for Evangelizing the Jews, the Church Missionary Society, and other kindred institutions were organized in his day, and with his most cordial and efficient coöperation, while his powerful and persuasive eloquence did much to give them impulse, and to establish them firmly in the hearts of his countrymen.

As the advocate of these mighty engines of moral good, he went forth to almost every city in the kingdom; by his impassioned eloquence not only attracting thousands to listen, but inducing them to become coworkers in the good cause.

Previous to entering upon these discursive labors he always procured a faithful curate to attend to the parish duties at Turvey, in the

same manner as he himself had done, thus securing to his flock their accustomed privileges while he was gathering materials for building the temple of salvation on a world-wide basis.

These journies led him into scenes of the sublime and beautiful, where his deep love of nature and his intensely poetical imagination found free scope and gathered rich stores for the future use of the preacher. He was like a merchantman seeking goodly pearls—filling his cabinet with them; and when the occasion occurred, he would give them a setting in some beautiful argument or some pathetic appeal.

Writing from the English lakes, and speaking of the effect of the scenery upon his imagination and feelings, he remarks, “The exquisite beauty and sublimity of this country almost makes a pen move of itself. Never did I pass so beautiful a day as this at the lakes. I shall sing the praises of October as the loveliest of months. This morning at six o’clock I was walking on the banks of Windermere to catch a sunrise. I had every thing I could wish, and observed the progress of the day with delight. The mysterious rolling of the clouds across the hills announced the first

influence of the sun. Tints the most beauteous skirted the eastern clouds. Those on the west caught them as by sympathy. Various patches of mountains soon gleamed with the reflection of the yet unseen luminary; and such innumerable vicissitudes of light and shade and close obscurity filled the scene as no tongue can describe. The lake in all its length of thirteen miles lay beneath me, with its thirty islands. I heard the early lowing of the cows, the bleating of the sheep, the neighing of the horse, the twittering of the birds, the rustling of the breeze, the rippling of the water, and dashing of the oar in a gentle kind of harmony. The sun advanced and threw a blaze of magnificent lustre over this paradisiacal landscape."

Again, still among the lakes, he writes, "This morning as I stood on an eminence looking down on the exquisitely lovely lake of Grasmere, environed by its amphitheatre of mountains, a momentary shower produced a rainbow. It extended from hill to hill over the valley, and seemed like a bridge for angels to pass over from one district of paradise to another.



“ ‘And as they pass let angels sing  
The wonders of creation’s King;  
And while they tune their harps to praise,  
I’ll gladly catch their solemn lays;  
Unite with them my feeble tongue,  
And give to gratitude my song.’ ”

From these extracts we gain some slight impression of the spirit of the man. His heart was alive to every thing fair and beautiful. Music, especially sacred, was his delight. He cultivated it as a science, and enjoyed it with the ardor of an enthusiast. But his greatest pleasure, next to direct communion with God and his word, was communion with God’s glorious works. He viewed them not merely with the eye of a poet, but with the gratitude of a Christian. The poetical idea was intensified by the devotional; and so, when he came to speak on the great themes of redemption, the sanctified imagery, gathered from the varied beauties of external nature, came gracefully forward to give force and attractiveness to his discourses. They glowed with the twofold light of a blended harmony between what nature imparts and what the Scriptures reveal. He was ever in search of some new and rare prospect, and would be found sometimes

by the deep sea, gazing on its expanse, or on the mountain top, looking over the intervening landscape, or climbing some high tower, and with glass in hand, gathering in his eye the boundless amphitheatre of beauties.

An interesting incident occurred to Mr. Richmond on one of these occasions. He had ascended a lofty tower in the dockyard at Portsmouth, and from its summit was viewing through a telescope the surrounding objects, when his imperial majesty the Emperor Alexander of Russia and suite unexpectedly entered. Mr. Richmond offered to withdraw, but the emperor would not consent, saying, "Perhaps, sir, you are acquainted with the points of view before us." Mr. Richmond assured him he well knew every spot in the neighborhood, and drawing out his telescope, directed the eye of the emperor to the different objects worthy of notice. After a long and interesting conversation with his majesty, Mr. Richmond took occasion to thank him for the interest he had taken in the Bible cause in Russia, when the emperor obligingly remarked, "Sir, my thanks are rather due to your country, and the friends of the cause; for had it not been for your example, we should have had no

Bible Society in Russia." Mr. Richmond, having subsequently sent a copy of his "Annals of the Poor" to the emperor, received a very kind note of recognition, accompanied by the present of a diamond ring.

Like most extemporaneous preachers, Legh Richmond has left behind him but few specimens—only three, it is said—of his eloquence in the form of printed sermons; and the principal one of these, preached in 1809 before the Church Missionary Society, though excellent in spirit, and forcible in its closing appeals, can, we think, scarcely represent his power as a pulpit orator.

It was when inspired by his great theme in presence of a large and attentive audience that his genius as a preacher broke forth upon his admiring listeners. Then the eye kindled and the voice became an expressive vehicle of thought. The soul on fire sent its burning fervor into the intellect, setting the imagination in a glow, and thence into the very words; and so kindling from speaker to hearer, the whole audience-chamber became radiant with the excitement.

A sermon delivered under such circumstances cannot be copied out in the retirement

of the closet, nor can it be caught and conveyed to the public eye by the efforts of the stenographer. True eloquence can no more be thus rendered than can the lightning flash be caught, or the thunder peals reverberated. The truth is, the power of a truly eloquent preacher, such as Legh Richmond was, lies in many accompanying circumstances, and depends much more than we are apt to suppose on a sort of inspiration in the speaker, and a favoring sympathy of the audience. Still there were more than these in the subject of our sketch. His learning, his clear conceptions, his popular style of reasoning, his fine imagination, his easy and fluent speech, his affectionate manner, his conceded purity of motives, all conspired to place him among the most eloquent and efficient clergymen of the church of England.

## REV. TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D. D.

AMONG the luminaries of a past generation, Dr. Dwight shines as a star of the first magnitude. Like most of our distinguished divines, his early ministry was passed in comparative obscurity. Fitted by nature and by intellectual culture for any position however exalted, he awaited the indications of Providence, content in the lesser, until summoned to the greater circle of influence. But such a man can never be hid. Even when occupying the small parish of Greenfield hill, and obliged to supplement a meagre salary by teaching an academy, he was a centre of attraction to hundreds who sought his acquaintance and enjoyed his hospitality.

When the presidency of Yale college became vacant in 1795, he was chosen to fill the responsible station. Here he preached and toiled and taught, until his influence, constantly augmenting, was felt to the very extremities of the body politic. Yale college owes a renewed life to Dr. Dwight, who found her in "the spirit of heaviness," and left her clothed in "the garments of praise."

Such an institution, gathering its pupils from every state and territory, and then pouring back upon the several communities whence they came a host of young men, moulded and modelled principally under his powerful intellect, was, in that day especially, a most important fountain of blessings both in church and state. It would hardly be deemed an exaggerated statement, were we to affirm that no man in the country then living exerted a wider or more salutary influence than the president of this institution.

Dr. Dwight was a scion from a noble stock, being grandson of the celebrated President Edwards. In person he was a most impressive figure. A stalwart form, with that rounded perfection which is suggestive neither of grossness nor of austerity; with a head that might, without flattery, be termed majestic; a face expressive of calm dignity, under which could be discerned an imprisoned humor and poetic fervor, and these traits being kept under restraint by the control of the higher faculties; with manners graceful and attractive: such is a not overdrawn likeness of the outward and visible man. His portrait is one on which the eye rests with almost perfect satisfaction. Ev-

ery thing is in harmony. The expression is that of one not only of high mental culture, but of great moral worth. There is dignity without haughtiness, and condescension without servility.

We have heard it said, that when Dr. Mason, Dr. Stanhope Smith, and Dr. Dwight met in a social circle at Princeton, New Jersey, the company fell into a side discussion on the comparative merits of these worthy men. Dr. Smith was acknowledged superior in some traits, Dr. Mason in others; but it was the unanimous verdict that a combination of all the great and attractive qualities met peculiarly in Dr. Dwight.

He usually dressed in a plain style. His coat, of the finest black cloth, was cut after the Franklinian or Quaker pattern; and this style, so suited to his person and his profession, he never altered, whatever might be the fashion of the day. What was said of Burke, might with equal truth be said of him: that any stranger, stopping with him under a shed in a rain-storm, would at once have recognized his greatness of character.

But we are less interested in the outer than the inner man. The temple is not so attract-



ive as the glory which illuminates it. We have to admit, however, that when there is a correspondence between the two, we are none the less impressed with the "tout ensemble."

As a philosopher, using the term to cover a wide scope of research, he had few equals, and in this country perhaps no superior. The book of nature he explored, and the word of God was his habitual study. To him each of these great volumes was a divine revelation, and by their conjoined effulgence they threw light on the mysteries of our being.

Dr. Dwight was a most eloquent lecturer on the subtle influences of nature, going into all the finer tracery of God's handiwork. Combining scientific skill with a sanctified imagination, he would, it is said, out of a mere leaf or flower raise a sublime discourse on the divine wisdom and goodness. His mind could grasp the vast relations of science to the physical and the moral world, while it was equally at home in the minuter and more common exigencies of practical life.

In the lecture-room, where perhaps more than anywhere else he gave full scope to his genius, the students, who had looked forward with almost impatient longings to the time

when they should come under his teachings, sat in mute astonishment at the depth of his learning, the flights of his imagination, the strength of his language, and the clear beaming conclusions of his reasoning. Hours seemed but moments. The driest subjects took life under his inspiring eloquence, and the tolling bell too soon announced the necessity for a pause.

What he was in the lecture-room he was also in the pulpit. His printed discourses are a treasure in any clergyman's library. They are read and admired as specimens of clear reasoning, sound doctrine, and an elevated style. They are, in general, not too deep for the comprehension of the unlearned, while some of them task the powers of the most erudite. They are doctrinal and practical. In the former, a truth is stated, then analyzed, then illustrated, then brought home to the convictions. In the latter, every department of moral responsibility is explored, every Christian duty inculcated, and every incentive to holy obedience urged. The divine law is discussed in its bearings on practical life, or with a view to convict the conscience, or to lead, by a sort of scholastic discipline, to the cross

of Christ. But when the great themes of redemption are under consideration, Oh how his soul rises and soars in an exultant, eagle flight! Majesty of thought is combined with simplicity of diction, and the fervor of the Christian is mingled with the reasonings of the philosopher.

These discourses have become classic among the circle of studious minds. The style is characterized by great force in the use of language, and great beauty in the pertinency and variety of illustration. It has a harmonious ring—the result, not so much of skill in the arrangement of words, as in the glowing impetuosity of the thought itself, which swells out in appropriate euphony like the clear peals of an organ.

We give an example, cited at random from his first volume. It is a few closing sentences from a sermon on the temptation of Satan: “In the first temptation we see the doctrine strongly illustrated. Here no prayer ascended for aid. Here therefore no aid was given; and here, left to themselves, the miserable victims were of course destroyed. Let us then learn wisdom from their example and their end. Let us avoid the one, that we may escape the other. For protection from tempters and temptations,

both within us and without us, let our prayers unceasingly rise with fervent repetition: especially when the serpent approaches, when the charm is about to begin, and when his mouth is ready to open and swallow us up, let our cries for help ascend to heaven that He who is swift to hear, and always prepared to pity and relieve, may mercifully extend his arm and snatch us from the jaws of destruction."

It was not until the latter part of his ministry that Dr. Dwight wrote out his sermons. From his early manhood he had been compelled by impaired vision to preach extemporaneously. His rapid concentration of thought—the result of rigid intellectual discipline—gave him such power over his subject, that the sermon had all the exactness of a studied effort, and all the ardor of an impromptu discourse.

"When unconfined by notes," says one, "the whole field of thought was before him. Into that field he entered, conscious where the subject lay and by what metes and bounds it was limited. Within these limits his powers had full scope, his imagination left to range at will, his feelings were kindled, and his mind became in the highest degree creative. Its conceptions were instantaneous, its thoughts

were new and striking, its deductions clear and irresistible, and its images exact representations of what his eye saw, living, speaking, and acting. When we add that these were accompanied by the utmost fluency and force of language, a piercing eye, a countenance deeply marked with intellect, a strong emphasis, a voice singular for its compass and melody, an enunciation remarkably clear and distinct, a person dignified and commanding, and gestures graceful and happy, we need not inform the reader that his pulpit efforts at this period possessed every characteristic of animated and powerful eloquence."

To some his life-long calamity—weakness of eyes—might seem a very serious obstruction to the acquisition, if not the impartation of knowledge. But where there exists genius such as he possessed, an impediment like this only serves to stimulate the mind to higher efforts, and render the triumph not only certain but signal. Evidently in his case it appeared to operate as a stimulus to the intellectual faculties; so that what others obtained by their own reading, he acquired more thoroughly perhaps through the eyes of an amanuensis. By long habit and continued efforts,

his power to dictate also became astonishing and almost incomprehensible. He could keep his amanuensis hard at work while he carried on at the same time a conversation with friends or with his family. Without embarrassment or disturbance on his part, as the copyist ended one sentence, he was supplied with another as pertinent and connected as if his own pen had been at work in the solitude of his closet. It was in this way that his sermons, constituting his body of divinity now so extensively read and admired, were composed.

One feature in the pulpit efforts of this great and good man ought not to be omitted, which, considering his position and his high literary standing, might not have been expected; namely, *his intense desire to save the souls of his hearers*. In all his preaching there was the utter absence of any thing like self-complacency or self-seeking. He seems to have framed every sermon with the desire to convince the errorist, to comfort the Christian, or to rouse the impenitent to a sense of his guilt and danger. This is the impression made upon those who heard, and the same may be said of those who read his sermons. There is no straining after popular effect, no bait thrown

out for popular applause. His great soul would have disdained to use his high position as a pedestal for personal vanity.

"A characteristic of his preaching," says his biographer, "was a constant regard to practical effect. Even the sermons which compose these volumes, will be found in their application to have this discriminating character. It was impossible for him to enter the desk but as the herald of reconciliation. He could not fail to discover his affecting sense of the greatness of the Being who sent him, or of the infinite importance of the message which he brought. And his most obvious purpose was to accomplish the salvation of those to whom it was delivered." A single sermon from the text, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," was accompanied by the special and powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, resulting in a revival among the students, and the ingathering of nearly half of them to the college church.

"In the performance of the other exercises of public worship," says one who knew him, "he greatly excelled. His manner of reading the Scriptures was peculiarly happy and impressive. In prayer, as it regarded subjects,



sentiment, and language, all was appropriate. Free from form, from tiresome repetition, and from lukewarmness, and under the influence of the deepest abasement and prostration of soul, his heart appeared to be melted and his lips to be touched as with a live coal from off the altar."

It would be a task not more agreeable to the writer than gratifying to the reader, to follow this noble scholar and divine into the various walks of social and literary life, and exhibit those attractive features which shone out so gracefully under all these circumstances. He was not one of those great men who loom up in the distance, but are of diminished proportions when near. Whatever might have been the respect felt for him as viewed through his public services or his high position, that reverence would not have disappeared, but would have been deepened by a more intimate personal communion. "Like Johnson," quoting the words of another, "he shone in no place with more distinguished splendor than in the circle of the friends he loved, when the glow of animation lighted up his countenance, and a perpetual stream of knowledge and wisdom flowed from his lips. Interesting narration, vivid description, and sallies of humor,

anecdotes of the just, the good, the generous, and the brave, these all were blended in fine proportions to form the bright and varied tissue of his discourse."

But as the object of this sketch is to bring into view more particularly his preaching qualities, and to show in what respect he excelled as a pulpit orator, we would leave to others the grateful task of delineating more fully the scholar, the gentleman, and the friend.

New England boasts of many great names both in church and state. She has been well represented at the bar, in the senate, and in the pulpit; but we doubt if the emblazoned list contains any one name that should stand higher in the catalogue. Fisher Ames may have rivalled him in burning eloquence, Daniel Webster in the heavy calibre of his mental armament, and the younger Adams in the memory of historical events; but in Dr. Dwight there was a combination of great qualities, with no personal weaknesses to obscure their beauty. He was, in one sense—and that the best that we are allowed to attribute to fallen humanity—a perfect man. We say it to the honor of that Being who made him what he was. To God be all the glory.





## REV. JONATHAN EDWARDS.

THE reputation of Edwards rests principally on his metaphysical and theological writings. The philosopher is more prominent than the preacher. The treatise on the will is much oftener referred to than the sermon at Enfield, where the audience cried aloud for mercy. We are also so far removed from the scenes and circumstances wherein this great divine acted, that it is difficult to form a just impression of the influence which he then exerted, or of the prominent characteristics of his preaching. But well do we know that no man who lived in that great revival period, as it may be called, exerted a wider or more salutary influence.

From boyhood, Edwards was a close student. When others of his age were interested in such books as Robinson Crusoe, he was absorbed in Locke's Treatise on the Understanding. He entered college at twelve, graduated before he was seventeen, and became tutor at twenty-one—proofs not only of precocity, but of proficiency.

His tendency was to abstract studies: when he investigated, he went to the bottom; and when he published his views, he had exhausted the subject, and left nothing to be said in reply. While others busied themselves about the superstructure, he was examining and strengthening the foundations. The church of God owes him a debt of gratitude for the impregnable fortress which he has built around her most precious doctrines, defying the assaults of both her open and her more subtle adversaries.

As a pulpit orator, Edwards perhaps could not with truth be placed in the front rank. And yet this depends very much on what is understood by sacred eloquence. If it mean full, powerful, and varied intonation of voice; if it include necessarily a great deal of action and of graceful gesture; if it require a soaring fancy and an impetuous utterance, then we are obliged to deny his claim to the character of an eloquent divine. He had neither of these characteristics.

His constitution was so delicate, that it was by much care as to diet and exercise that he pursued his studies or performed the public services of the sanctuary. His voice, as to volume and force, was feeble. He made few

gestures, and sometimes scarcely raised his eyes from the manuscript.

But notwithstanding these drawbacks, he was a powerful preacher, so far as power is illustrated by efficiency. In his day, the idea of a sermon was very different from what it is in ours. The audiences were more generally trained to severe thought; and ordinary congregations listened to the discourse less as a matter of temporary excitement and more as a lesson of permanent instruction. If the sermon was a discussion of some doctrinal point, with close logical reasoning, they braced themselves up with greater intensity of thought, in order to understand it. Accordingly the preacher, adapting his style and manner to the taste and character of his audience, often gave them "strong meat" as they were "able to bear it." He gave them a view of the massive foundations of their faith. He took them behind the veil, where the simple stern attributes of truth had sway. He preached of God—his sovereignty, his justice, his holiness, as revealed in his law and illustrated in his providence. He spoke of these great truths, not in the tinselled rhetoric of our times, but in the strong, majestic, unpolished Saxon.



His only care as to style was, to give a clear conception of the thought, and to express it in the most forcible terms. His writings are not read with a view to the smoothness of his diction, but rather to the acquisition of his ideas. Who would be so presumptuous as to undertake to modernize Edwards' style, or to attempt to polish the rough granite walls of truth which he has erected?

And yet it must not be supposed that no beauties are to be found in his writings save those of simple truth and solid reasoning. Was Edwards destitute of the imaginative faculty? Were there no folded wings about this strong angel capable of soaring? Was there no eagle eye looking wistfully towards the sun? Read his sermon on "the Excellency of Christ," or that on "the Sinner in the Hands of an angry God," and then say if the pen that portrays the glory of Immanuel, or, dipped in the days colors of retribution, describes the doom of the wicked, be not as powerful for vivid description as before it had been for logical exactness.

His descriptive sermons partake, however, more of the grand than of the beautiful. He is more like Ezekiel amid the stormy symbols

of wrath, than like Isaiah tuning his harp to evangelical strains. With Edwards, mount Sinai is altogether in smoke and fire, and the footsteps of Jehovah are heard in the tramp of its thunders. He seems calculated, by the peculiar attributes of his genius, to echo in advance "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." How terrible must have been that sermon on the doom of sinners, delivered in a revival at Enfield, when from solemnity the feelings of the audience deepened at length into an insupportable agony, and the cry burst forth, "What must we do to be saved?"

It will not do to deny to such a man a claim to sacred eloquence. He may not possess the charm of a graceful delivery, nor the music of a well-modulated voice, nor the skill of a practical rhetorician ; but he has power—a power that somehow arrests the attention, holds it, deepens it, until the very gates of heaven seem opening, and the caverns of hell yawning before the eyes of his hearers.

Wherein lay this power ? We must search for it beyond the style, beyond the manner, for in neither does it seem to lie. We must trace it in the spirit of the preacher ; in the soul that, like Moses, had been face to face with God.

We all know from actual experience the difference between words spoken from real and deep feeling, and those which are formal or merely professional. The latter may be more in accordance with the rules of the rhetorician, and we may not be able to discover a flaw in language or in elocution ; but the well-spoken sentences fail to touch the heart, to disturb the conscience, or to rouse to energetic action. It is all artificial work. It is a palace of ice glittering in the sun. Such sermons may be called great, but they lack the very soul of eloquence. On the other hand, where the preacher has his own heart imbued with the sentiments which he aims to transfuse into the souls of others, and when, coming from secret communion with God—where, like the prophets of old, he has been led into visions of the awful future—he speaks in God's name the great and solemn message entrusted to him, though the art of the orator may be absent, the great end of sacred eloquence, conviction, is accomplished.

In saying this, as illustrative of all the effect of Edwards' preaching, we would not be understood as attributing to man what properly belongs to the Spirit of God. God gave to Edwards not only a great mind, but a great

soul ; not only intellect, but deep feeling ; not only the power to investigate divine truth, but a perception of its solemn bearings on the destiny of man. It was a baptism from heaven, by waters taken from the river of life, bathing all his faculties in a renovating and refreshing influence.

Herein lay the power of the preacher. It was a power not of itself able to reach the great end of preaching, but a power more commonly sanctified to its attainment. It was this heaven-inspired feeling which, vitalizing the truths of God's word as enunciated on the occasion alluded to at Enfield, sent the message home to the hearts and consciences of his hearers, while the Spirit of God made those truths "sharper than a two-edged sword."

Edwards lived in an age of stirring events. The great revival, beginning in England and lighting up at length this Western hemisphere, spread like an atmosphere over the churches, waking and warming into life the long slumbering energies of God's people. In the midst of it all was seen Whitefield, standing like an angel in the sun.

Who that reads the history of those times, but must be impressed with the newly com-

municated power of God? The churches were visited as with pentecostal fire. It filled the whole land. Edwards caught the flame. Such a soul as his could not fail to sympathize in this work of the Spirit. His sermons became like the trumpet-tongued angel, waxing louder and louder. Truth fell with startling emphasis upon ears hitherto dull of hearing, and upon hearts hard as adamant. Thousands felt the quickening power.

After a time the spirit of true piety began to be less distinguishable, and a spirit of fanaticism began to develop itself. Every good thing is liable to perversion. Nay, the very best thing that God ever gave or man received may be so perverted or abused as to produce a moral monstrosity. This is not the product of true piety, but of its counterfeit. It is evidence that humanity is weak as well as wicked; and so religion has to suffer for errors traceable only to the absence of her enlightening power.

Edwards saw the coming storm, and prepared for it. He saw excitable men and ministers embracing views derogatory to truth, and calculated fatally to mislead the soul. Not only did he aim by his preaching to coun-

teract it, but he prepared and published a treatise on the Religious Affections, which he intended should serve as a test of true piety, and so unveil, and if possible arrest the growth of fanaticism.

A more discriminating work on the inward experience of piety has never been produced. It would seem as if every man who reads it must decide without further proof his position and his destiny.

It would be aside from the object of this sketch to enter upon a discussion as to the merits of his controversial writings. They are numerous, and they take in subjects of vital importance. He is fair in his statements, clear in his reasoning, and carries his readers to conclusions which some of them might not perhaps relish, but which it would be very difficult to refute. His controversial and metaphysical works are considered by the best judges as among the most gigantic efforts of the human mind. His fame in this department is as great in Europe as it is in America.

Dr. Chalmers, writing to a friend in this country, says of Edwards, "I have long esteemed him as the greatest of theologians; combining, in a degree that is quite unexam-

pled, the profoundly intellectual with the devotedly spiritual and sacred, and realizing in his own person a most rare yet most beautiful harmony between the simplicity of the Christian pastor on the one hand, and on the other all the strength and prowess of a giant in philosophy; so as at once to minister from Sabbath to Sabbath, and with the most blessed effect to the hearers of his plain congregation, and yet in the high field of authorship to have traversed in a way that none had ever done before him the most inaccessible places, and achieved such a mastery as had never till his time been realized over the most arduous difficulties of our science."

It must be confessed that, considering the space which President Edwards occupied as a Christian philosopher and eminent divine, there has come down to us a comparative meagre amount of reliable matter illustrative of his peculiarities as a preacher. From his printed sermons we cannot, in this respect, gather a very satisfactory impression. They are full of thought, with flashes of eloquence, and closing generally with a solemn and searching application. They gleam with pertinent quotations from the Scriptures, and show a deep



and thorough knowledge of the springs of human action. Yet after all we long to know more of the speaker—his expression of face, his whole air and manner, coombining in the secret charm which so held his audience spell-bound. We are almost impatient with his contemporaries, that they should not have transmitted a fuller and more satisfactory portrait of this great divine.

The nearest approach to the gratification of this so natural a longing, may be found in a paragraph of the short biographical sketch in his first volume: "Viewing Mr. Edwards as a writer of sermons, we cannot give him the epithet *eloquent*, in the common acceptation of the term. We see in him nothing of the great masters of eloquence, except good sense, conclusive reasoning, and the power of moving the passions. Oratorical pomp, a cryptic method, luxurious descriptions presented to the imagination, and a rich variety of rhetorical figures, enter not into his plan. But his thoughts are well digested, and his reasoning conclusive. He produces considerations which not only force the assent, but also touch the conscience. He urges divine authority by quoting and explaining Scripture in a form calculated to rouse

the soul. He moves the passions not by little artifices, like the professed rhetorician, but by saying what is much to the purpose in a plain, serious, and interesting way ; and thus making reason, conscience, fear, and love to be decidedly in his favor. And thus the passions are moved in the most profitable manner ; the more generous ones take the lead, and they are directed in the way of practical utility."





## REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

"THE SERAPHIC MAN."

THE name of Whitefield is stereotyped on the popular mind as the representative of that highest of arts, pulpit eloquence; so that to say that a preacher is as eloquent as Whitefield, would be regarded as extravagant as to say that a senator was as eloquent as Demosthenes. And yet strange is it, that no biographer or writer, in his day or ours, has given a just and true portraiture of this unequalled preacher. We read his printed sermons, and they disappoint us. We say to ourselves, These are not great sermons, nor apparently eloquent ones. We wonder how it was that their utterance, even by his fire-touched lips, could so have entranced listening thousands. But the truth is, Whitefield wrote these sermons on his voyages across the Atlantic, amid the discomforts of sea-life, and in the absence of those stirring sympathies which were kindled in the crowded audiences of Tottenham Court. They cannot give one, therefore, a just idea of the preacher. It would be about as ab-

surd to judge of his eloquence by these specimens, as it would to judge of the spirit and fire of a war-horse on the battle-field by seeing him leisurely walked over the parade-ground.

Of all men, Whitefield was the last to transmit the fire of his sermons through the press. So much did he owe to physical temperament, to the volume and varied intonations of his voice, to the irrepressible fires of a soul all alive to the grand and overpowering visions of divine truth, to a sort of inspiration kindled by the sight of thousands whose eyes were ready to weep and whose hearts were ready to break the moment his clarion voice rang on their expectant ears—so much did he owe to these circumstances, that his eloquence cannot be appreciated by any account of it which can be given verbally, or which can be delineated on paper. Vain is it, therefore, to look into his printed sermons to find his power. Equally hopeless is it, at this distant day, to write his life with the idea of conveying to the reader a just estimate of him as a pulpit orator. Philip seems to labor under this consciousness when he admits that his life is yet to be written. But we can scarcely conceive

how it could be done satisfactorily, even were Southey, the accomplished biographer of Wesley, alive, and willing to undertake it.

Whitefield's eloquence grew out of many circumstances, all of which cannot be explored, any more than we can trace the mysterious sources of the rapid, full-flowing, and fertilizing Nile. There was a histrionic vein in his very boyhood. The play of his passions even then was wonderful. As he grew to manhood, these qualities ripened unconsciously into strength; and so gifted was he at the very outset of his public life, that had he chosen the stage instead of the pulpit, Garrick might have found a competitor whose genius would have eclipsed, if not utterly extinguished, his own. Such is said to have been the admission of that celebrated tragedian after listening to one of Whitefield's sermons.

Without being handsome, Whitefield's face was a speaking one. It was a luminous medium of the passions. The bright or the dark, the lurid cloud and the calm sunshine, made themselves known not only in the voice and the gesture, but especially in the ever-varying expressions of the eloquent countenance. The writer, who has sought to obtain from every



possible source of the facts concerning this matchless preacher, once heard a very old man say that when he was listening to Whitefield he was spell-bound, and could scarcely tell by what means the magic power was so potent over him. After some questioning, the old man said he believed it was owing to his voice in part, but more to his expressive face. That face was like a canvas, and the preacher painted on it every passion that stirs in the human breast. It was at one moment terrific, as if all the furies were enthroned on that dark brow, and the next, as by a dissolving view, there would come forth an angelic sweetness that savored of heaven itself. His eyes, upturned, seemed to the beholder to penetrate to the very throne of God. He saw, so it would seem, the celestial host. He addressed Gabriel as if familiar with that bright archangel. He bade him suspend his flight and receive the news and bear it upward that one more sinner had repented. Who but Whitefield would have dared the almost impossible rhetorical experiment? Who would have ventured to cry out, "Stop, Gabriel, stop?" But it was done by him, and as naturally as if the vision were real, and as if Gabriel furled his

wing at the preacher's call, and received the joyful message. And when too he took the sinner to the judgment-seat, tried him by God's unerring law, brought him in guilty, and then, with moistened eyes and a heart burning with pity, he put on the cap of condemnation, and proceeded, with choking utterance, to pronounce sentence, while the audience were melted to tears; when all this was done, not as an actor would do it, but in the faith of a real prospective scene, and with unutterable sorrow of soul, as speaking under God's high sanction, how intensely moved and excited must the audience have been!

It was no affectation when his tears fell like rain. It was for no rhetorical effect that he threw himself into these impassioned expostulations with his careless and impenitent hearers. Whitefield never played a part. His boldest and most original pulpit efforts were the natural efflux of a soul which knew no selfish impulse, but which beat with sincere love to lost men. It was not *Whitefield*, but *Christ* that he was thinking of. It was not to attract admiration upon himself, but to draw all men to the Saviour, that he thus spoke. His eloquence was kindled at the cross, and

displayed its grandest features when redemption by that cross was its mighty theme.

His personal appearance—judging from what is considered the best engraved likeness—is not calculated to impress us either with great intellectual force or a graceful exterior. That wig of huge dimensions, covering and concealing the higher and more striking lineaments of the forehead; the upraised hands, an undesirable thing in a picture, though a most impressive one to witness; his eyes, so small, with a decided cast in one of them, render this likeness any thing but consonant with our preconceived notions of the “seraphic man.” But while in person he was not among the most majestic or the most attractive, all defects were lost sight of the moment that eloquent voice began to peal out its unrivalled music. The term “seraphic” was not given to him for his exterior grace or his symmetrical features. It was the spirit within him shining through and illuminating those features, until the audience, hushed or excited, were ready to doubt if the speaker were a man or an angel. His burning eloquence seemed to the listener as properly symbolizing the responsive cry one to another of the glowing seraphim.

The eloquence of Whitefield, by the concurrent testimony of those with whom the writer in younger days conversed, including one venerable divine, was owing, as in most other similar cases, to a combination of qualities, rather than to any single excellence. The great foundation of it all lay in a soul of intense emotions stirred to its very depths by the power of religion. He was a consecrated man from the first. It was a full, joyful, and cordial surrender of all his powers and affections to Christ, and to the love of souls for Christ's sake. He counted every thing but loss for Him. His love was the grand impulsive power in all his journeys, his labors, his self-denials, and his aims. In this respect he came nearer than any modern preacher we know of to "the great apostle of the Gentiles."

This burning zeal for Christ found expression in the gesture, the countenance, and the voice. These were the electric wires through which the fiery current within flowed down in startling shocks or melting influences upon listening thousands. In gesture, no man ever excelled, perhaps none ever equalled him. These gestures were unstudied, and so gave

the greater emphasis to his utterances. A single movement of his finger, with the accompanying expression of his face, would thrill an audience or dissolve them in tears. His face, radiant with the light from heaven, which he had caught on the Mount of Communion, begat an immediate sympathy, as all eyes were riveted upon it. A countenance will thus affect us, as we all know. How often have we felt its power ere a word was spoken. But Oh, when that face began to throw off from its lustrous surface the rays of divine intelligence, and when tears and smiles alternated, as the subject was pensive or joyful, how did the audience with responsive sympathy weep or rejoice under the eloquent preacher! But the voice, what shall we say of that? It was such as man is seldom gifted with. It could be heard distinctly, on a clear, still evening, for a mile. It was smooth, variable, and could express the gentlest emotions. It was capable also of swelling into thunder-peals, and then every ear tingled and every heart trembled. If the organ of some grand cathedral had the power to speak, and could express the finest and most tender sentiments from its delicate pipes, and roll forth majestic thoughts on

its largest ones, it would give some idea of Whitefield's variable and powerful tones.

Whitefield's power as a pulpit orator cannot be separated from his pious emotions nor from his religious views. Had he embraced a theory of religion less emotional, more after the pattern of rationalists or ritualists, his eloquence would have been lost to the world. Never would his soul so have taken fire, nor his lips glowed with the burning coal of enthusiastic passion. But he believed in man's ruin by sin; in the certain interminable woe that awaits the impenitent; in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and the free offer of salvation through faith in the cross. Such were his views, and under this conviction he looked upon his audiences. He saw but one hope set before them, and with his whole soul moved and melted by the love of Christ on the one hand, and the love of souls on the other, he pressed every hearer, with all the energy of a dying man speaking to dying men, to accept the great salvation. Nor do we think that the pulpit can reach its appropriate power, nor for any length of time retain it, unless these grand cardinal doctrines of grace are the inspiring themes.

The eloquence of Whitefield never waned. It was greater, if possible, at fifty than at thirty. It was never more impressive or powerful than when the silence of death suddenly settled upon his lips ; and his last efforts in the pulpit partook so much of a heavenly inspiration, that some regarded them as the preparatory vibrations of that golden harp upon which he was to swell for ever the high notes of redemption.







## REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

AMONG the names of the past which need no monumental pile to perpetuate their memory is that of Richard Baxter. More than a century and a half has rolled away since he fell asleep, and yet the amaranth upon his brow is now greener and emits a sweeter fragrance than when it was first wreathed around it.

Baxter lived in stirring times. His heroic bearing when the church was in peril, his clarion voice, sounding loud and clear amid the din and strife, made him a rallying point for the persecuted, and a terror to the oppressor. He was a man of true courage, fearing only God, and acting only under the high consideration of duty. When the church demanded what his conscience could not concede, he broke away from her thralldom; and when Cromwell succeeded to power, he entered his protest against what he considered a usurpation. And after the restoration, when a wily government sought to close his mouth by the offer of a bishopric, he, like Owen, re-

fused to accept it. These noble men thought less of their own elevation than of the interests of Zion, and cared more for freedom of speech and freedom of conscience than for the emoluments and honors of a bishopric.

As an eloquent preacher, Baxter's claim admits not of a doubt. There was no minister of his day superior to him—and it was a day too when stars of the first magnitude revolved in the ecclesiastical sphere. Dr. John Owen, the man of immense learning, vice-chancellor of the University, yet in spirit humble as a child; John Flavel, of burning zeal, and with prayers that seemed to storm the citadel of heaven; Matthew Henry, so pithy and pointed in his interpretations of Scripture, were his contemporaries, and among these Baxter moved as a sort of spiritual Agamemnon. With the learning of Owen he combined the earnestness of Flavel, and far in advance of both was he in the force and even classic purity of his style. But Baxter regarded style only as a vehicle of thought, and adopted words and sentences best adapted to bring out that thought in the strongest light, just as the artilleryman regards that piece of ordnance as the best which carries the ball furthest and sends it the

most surely to its mark. He seems never to have studied *how* he should write, but *what*. The *thought* was the great point, and the mode of expressing it was intended first to make it clear, and next to give it point and power.

Read any of his writings and you will see at once that his grand design was to get the truth vividly before the reader—to make him not only see and acknowledge it, but better still, to *feel* it. He wrote at men. Knowing that the heart had more influence for or against religion than the intellect, all his arguments and appeals addressed to the reason were simply with a view of reaching at length the selfish and sin-loving heart. He is in this respect a model for all succeeding ministers. Preach *at* men as he did, use language simply to give force to thoughts, assail the reason only that you may get deeper down where lies the demon of selfishness and unbelief, point your artillery in the direction of the mail-coated conscience and heart as Baxter did, and see if the pastor of Kidderminster will be the only one to witness nearly a whole town converted to the faith of Jesus.

Baxter was a pulpit orator without any idea of being one. He had no such end in

view. He was filled with the love of God and the love of souls, and his only aim was to bring sinners to God and to educate them for the kingdom of heaven. Every thing that he did, said, or wrote has this aim only.

He was by nature a man of might in body as well as in mind. Tall, muscular, and of gigantic strength, he was a match for any bravo. Some who feared not his moral power stood in dread of his strong arm. An anecdote illustrative of this is told of him. A swaggering bully hearing of Baxter's great strength, was disposed to put it to the test. So, leading his horse into the garden where the pastor was at work, he began in no very respectful way to banter him. The patience of the good man was at length exhausted, and dropping his spade, he seized the intruder and pitched him over the fence. The astonished man, picking himself up, simply said, "Sir, I will thank you if you will throw my horse over after me." This anecdote, I think, was related to the class by our venerated instructor, the late Rev. Dr. Miller of Princeton.

Judging from his writings, Baxter must have had great power in the pulpit. It is impossible that such burning words as gleam in

every line of the "Call to the Unconverted" could have been uttered in any other tones than those of the deepest feeling. He seems fairly to clutch the soul in a sort of agony, as if, so far as man's ability could prevent, the sinner must not take another step in the broad road to hell. He expostulates, he weeps, he pleads. Rushing between the precipice and the infatuated sinner who would dare its brink, he cries, in God's name, "Why will ye die?"

His "Saints' Rest" was written with the heavenly inheritance almost in sight. He was himself just about, as he supposed, to enter upon it. The dividing line seemed to him but a breath. He lay panting on the brink of the cold river, directing his eyes towards the celestial landscape which his faith descried, and for which his heart so ardently longed. Forgetting the things which were behind—the dreary way over which his feet had toiled, and the sharp conflicts which had left their scars on his bruised soul—he now concentrates all his interest on the glory that was to be revealed. In a strain seemingly almost inspired, he paints in glowing but truthful colors the celestial paradise. He makes us see as

it were into heaven. He asks us to accompany him where the echo of the angel harps may be heard, and the white robes of the redeemed are seen to glimmer. So far as language can express, or the imagination picture the glorified state, he has embodied its most striking features, while yet every line and lineament is in accordance with the simple revelations of the Bible. By his luminous and penetrating genius, however, he has placed in new and attractive lights truths which had been familiar; and the scenes which to our weaker faith had been but dimly discerned, are rendered more vivid and more distinct through the medium of his superior spiritual vision. As no man, after Bunyan, can venture to write another *Pilgrim's Progress*, and no poet, after Milton, can hope to sing of *Paradise Lost*, so no author can expect to treat of the saints' everlasting rest, since this ecstatic divine has written out the impressions which his dying vision caught of its attractions and its glories. In truth, so far as language can go in defining and a sanctified imagination in conceiving "the rest that remaineth," Baxter may be said to have exhausted the subject. He has left nothing more to be said. All that

remains is to see and to realize, and *that* can be done only when language has ceased to be a medium of thought and the visions of eternity are brought into direct contact with the conscious soul. But let us thank Baxter for strewing our path to heaven with flowers so fragrant, and for gilding "the valley of the shadow of death" with so much of the radiance of "the bright and morning star." Long familiar with this world, and experimentally ignorant of the dark future, few can look upon death without some dread. But how much more fearful would be the recoil if no such compensations and hopes and prospects had been suggested and promised. Praised be God for revealing the antidote to death; and thanks to Richard Baxter, under God, for making its gateway ring with the notes of anticipated triumph.

Baxter was not only a champion of moral truth—a sort of Cœur de Lion in the field of theological warfare, wielding the battle-axe of argument with an irresistible arm—but he was equally distinguished in the home field of peaceful culture. He was the model pastor as well as the model preacher. He took a field, the most hopeless, and made it as the garden



of God. What our engineers and landscape gardeners have done for our Central Park, converting barren rocks and unhealthy ravines into a paradise of beauty, Baxter did for Kidderminster. If Augustus Cæsar made it his boast that, having found Rome brick, he had left it marble, Baxter, we think, might have spoken of a far more noble achievement, when, by heaven's blessing on his spiritual labors, he had transformed Kidderminster from a heap of rubbish and ruins to a living temple, radiant with the indwelling presence of God. "Before his coming thither," says one, "the place was overrun with ignorance and profaneness; but by the divine blessing on his wise and faithful cultivation, the fruits of righteousness sprang up in rich abundance. He at first found but a single instance or two of daily family prayer in a whole street; and at his going away, but one family or two could be found in some streets that continued to neglect it. And on Lord's days, instead of the open profanation to which they had been so long accustomed, a person, in passing through the town in the intervals of public worship, might even hear hundreds of families engaged in singing psalms, reading the Scrip-

tures, and other good books, or such sermons as they had written down while they heard them from the pulpit. His care of the souls committed to his charge and the success of his labors among them were truly remarkable, for the number of his stated communicants rose to six hundred, of whom he himself declared there were not twelve concerning whose sincere piety he had not reason to entertain good hopes."

Such a man was authorized to speak to ministers of their duty, and to the saints of their everlasting rest. The *reformed* pastor is after all but the *real* pastor, going up and down the streets of Kidderminster warning every man and teaching every man, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He who for thirty years lay almost on the borders of eternity, expecting every day to receive his summons to depart—who went each Sabbath into the pulpit and preached as though it were his last sermon, might well expatiate on the mansions of eternal rest, and invoke the lagging disciples to rouse up and renew the race for immortality. Every thing about Baxter wore the aspect of a heavenly nobility. Great by nature, he was greater still by grace. The masculine strength of

character which he originally possessed was softened almost into angelic sweetness by the sanctifying power of religion. Among the great lights of the Reformation, or rather vindication—for he contended for principles which Luther had inaugurated and Calvin defended—he may, in the language of another, “be regarded as a standard-bearer. He labored much, as well in preaching as in writing, and with an abundant blessing on both. He had all the high mental qualities of his class in perfection. His mind is inexhaustible and vigorous and vivacious to an extraordinary degree. He seizes irresistibly on the attention, and carries it along with him, and we assuredly do not know any author who can be compared with him for the power with which he brings his reader directly face to face with death, judgment, and eternity, and compels him to look upon them and converse with them. He is himself most deeply serious, and the holy solemnity of his own soul seems to envelope the reader as with the air of a temple.”

## REV. JOHN BUNYAN.

THE name of Bunyan is familiar to every Christian household. His *Pilgrim's Progress* has a high place in their affections, and in many of their libraries it is placed next to the Bible itself. Few however have thought of Bunyan as an eloquent expositor of those doctrines so beautifully illustrated in his immortal allegory. Whereas, if they will read his *Life and Times*, they will discover that his claim to their admiration is founded not only on what he has written, but on what he did and suffered in the cause of evangelical truth. A noble witness was he for God, when priestly power dominated over liberty of conscience. He preferred twelve years' imprisonment in Bedford jail to a freedom which, if enjoyed, must needs have been purchased at the sacrifice of principle. But what intolerance did against Bunyan, Providence overruled for the benefit of mankind. His incarceration suggested his *Pilgrim's Progress*, and gave him the time to work it out in all its graphic and picturesque beauty. "Out of the eater thus came forth

meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Thanks to God, who caused the rod of the oppressor to blossom into fragrance and to bear such refreshing fruit.

But we have to do with Bunyan not as the epic poet of Christian heroism, but as a preacher of the gospel. Long time was he in preparation for this great work. His theology was not learned in the schools of the prophets, but altogether in the school of Christ. His textbook was the simple word of God, and his teacher was the Holy Spirit. Drawing his knowledge thus from the fountain-head, it was fresh and pure; and taught by the Spirit, it was viewed in those lights and relations which reflected lustre on each particular doctrine, and gave impressiveness to the whole.

No man perhaps ever passed through a severer ordeal of inward trials and temptations. The old man of sin had such power, and held it so long, that when the struggle of the new man began it was almost like the giving up of the ghost. But the demon was at length cast out; and then such peace, such settled purpose of obedience, such simple trust in Christ took possession of his soul, that thenceforward Bunyan ran the race like a victorious

competitor of the Olympic games. Such was the training of this obscure and humble man for the work of the ministry, which, with great diffidence and after many misgivings, he entered upon in the year 1656. "Wherefore," says he, "though of myself of all the saints the most unworthy, yet I, with great fear and trembling at the sight of my own weakness, did set upon the work, and did, according to my gifts and the proportion of my faith, preach that blessed gospel that God had showed me in the holy word of truth."

Who can doubt that Bunyan's genius would have been cramped, if not fettered, by the learning of the schools? or that a three years' drill in a theological seminary would have robbed his style of much of its Saxon strength and his spirit of much of its ethereal fire? Philip, in his *Life of Bunyan*, says, speaking of Bishop Burton's criticisms, "I can now see Burton's face lighted up with complacency when he declared, concerning Bunyan's preparation for the ministry, 'He hath, through grace, taken three heavenly degrees, namely, union with Christ, the anointing of the Spirit, and experience of temptation, which do more to fit a man for the weighty work of preaching the gospel

than all the university learning and degrees that can be had.' ”

Thus fitted, Bunyan began in a very humble way to exhibit his gifts, as the phrase then was, and forthwith the people were startled and astonished by his earnest, scriptural, and unctuous style of preaching. Hundreds flocked in from all quarters, and the word as dispensed by him was quick and powerful, convincing men of their sins, and leading them to hope in Jesus. “At this therefore I rejoiced; for the tears of those whom God did awaken by my preaching would be both solace and encouragement to me. These things therefore were as another argument unto me that God had called me to and stood by me in this work.”

Bunyan's first efforts at preaching were of the experimental style; that is, he simply preached as he felt. At first it was principally of the legal type, and aimed at arousing the conscience. This was owing to the fact that his own soul was stirred to its very depths by awful views of his just condemnation by the law. He went through the land fulminating against the vices and sins of his hearers, and pouring on their ears the terrors of a hastening retribution. But as God revealed to him more

of the hopes and joys of salvation, he exchanged the trumpet of condemnation for the harp of mercy. "I preached what I smartingly did feel—even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment. I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains. Thus I went on for the space of two years, crying out against men's sins and their fearful state because of them. After which the Lord came upon my soul with some pure peace and comfort through Christ. Wherefore now I altered my preaching, for still I preached what I saw and felt: now therefore I did much labor to hold forth Jesus Christ in all his offices, relations, and benefits to the world." We cannot help asking here, What sort of sermons would our audiences now have if, following Bunyan's example, ministers preached just what they felt?

It must not be supposed that Bunyan's lowly origin and humble occupation rendered him coarse or vulgar, for a refined manner and courteous bearing is sometimes to be found in other circles than those of wealth or high social position. "Never," said one who had the means of knowing, "was a rougher diamond polished into the beauty of holiness. He be-



came a gentleman too, when he became a Christian. I have heard men of fine tact apply to him playfully the expression, *He* not having the law—of good breeding—was a law unto himself; thus showing the work of that law written on his own heart.” We discover in the engraved likeness of him an elevation and purity of soul beaming in the eye and from the brow, which exclude all idea of rusticity or coarseness. The very roughness of the original gem only rendered it the more sparkling after it had been cut and set by Him who “maketh up his jewels.”

Bunyan’s remarkable conversion, taken in connection with his humble origin and occupation, drew no doubt public attention to his preaching. But it is a mistake to suppose that these were the principal attractions. The power to interest all classes—for the high as well as the low flocked to hear him—lay in his strong common-sense, his vivid fancy, and his unquestioned sincerity. His piety, planted in the very depths of his soul, welled up like an overflowing fountain whenever he discoursed on themes divine. There was also terrible point and directness in his appeals. “Those,” says his biographer, “who have read Bunyan’s

sermons, know well how he could particularize. There is a personality as well as point in his improvements, which makes individuals stand out even to the eye of the reader. We almost expect the strain of the appeal to take a new turn from some pentecostal outcry."

And here permit me to introduce a single specimen illustrative of the point and lively vigor of his preaching. It is from his sermon to "Jerusalem sinners." Peter is offering salvation freely to those who, in Bunyan's own strong language, "had their hands up to the elbows in his," Jesus', "heart's blood." "Repent every one of you, for the remission of sins." Unable to credit at once the sincerity of this offer, the first cries out, "But *I* was one of those that plotted to take away his life. May *I* be saved?" Peter. "Every one of you." "But *I*," says another, "was one of those that bore false witness against him. Is there grace for *me*?" Peter. "For every one of you." "But," says a third, "I was of them that cried out, 'Crucify him, crucify him.' What will become of *me*, think you?" Peter. "I am to preach remission of sins to every one of you." "But I was one of them," exclaims a fourth, "that did spit in his face—that mocked him

when, in anguish, he hung bleeding on the tree. Is there room for me?" Peter. "For every one of you." But this is not all. These Jerusalem sinners must have this offer again and again. Every one of them must be offered grace over and over. What a pitch of grace is this! Christ was minded to amaze the world.

"Reasons for this offer: 1. Because the biggest sinners have most need of mercy. 2. Because when they receive such mercy, it redounds most to the fame of Christ. 3. Because others, hearing, will be encouraged the more to come to him for life. 4. Because, showing mercy to the worst first, Christ most weakens the kingdom of Satan. 5. Because the biggest sinners, when converted, are usually the best helps in the church. 6. Because such, when converted, are apt to love Christ most. 7. Because by that means the impenitent will be left without excuse at the day of judgment."

Such is an outline of a great sermon, whose bold and burning words rang like God's trumpet through the assembly, and made the sinners of that day feel that while those of Jerusalem, not more hardened than themselves, had the offer of mercy, they too were required to repent and accept the great salvation.

One more extract: it is "the fruitless professor." "Come, Death, smite me this barren fig-tree! At this, Death comes into the chamber with grim looks, and hell following him to the bedside. Both stare this fruitless professor in the face; yea, begin to lay hands upon him: one smiting him with headache, heartache, shortness of breath, fainting, qualms, trembling joints, stoppage of the chest, and almost all the symptoms of one past recovery; the other (hell) casting sparks of fire into the mind and conscience. Now he begins to cry, 'Lord, spare me!' 'Nay,' saith God, 'you have been a provocation to me these three years. Take him, Death!' 'Oh, good Lord,' saith the sinner, 'spare me this one time, and I will do better.' 'But will you promise to amend?' 'Yes, indeed, Lord, and vow it too.' 'Well,' saith God, 'Death, let this professor alone for this time. He hath vowed to amend his ways, and vows are solemn things. It may be he will be afraid to break his vows.' And now God lays down the axe. At this the poor creature is very thankful, and calls on others to thank God." After describing a second interview, in equally dramatic and powerful style, the professor having proved false to his

vows, God comes to him with axe in hand for the last time. "God's fury cometh up in his face. He sweareth in his wrath that they shall not enter into his rest. 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'"

These extracts may give some idea of the power which the great allegorist exerted in the pulpit. The imagination, however, must supply the intense fervor, the expression of face and gesture, and the varied intonations of the voice. There can be no doubt that Bunyan was as eloquent in the pulpit as he was attractive with the pen; and that his Pilgrim was but an impersonation of himself—that the epic beauty of his hero was but a just reflection of the real mail-clad soldier of the cross, passing through sufferings to glory.

He often visited London, "where," says Southey, "his reputation was so great, that if a day's notice was given, the meeting-house at Southwark, at which he generally preached, would not contain half the people. Twelve hundred persons would attend his morning meeting in dark winter-time, and three thousand came to attend him at a towns-end meeting, where he was fain to be pulled through a back door almost over the people to get to the

pulpit. The sermons which he preached at Sinners' Hall were those which led Dr. Owen to say to Charles II., when the king upbraided him for hearing an illiterate tinker prate, 'Please your majesty, could I possess that tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning.' "

The secret of Bunyan's power is to be found in a combination of deep, intimate, and experimental acquaintance with his own heart, and a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. Penetrating through and illuminating all, was a fancy of the most vigorous and lively kind. It was an atmosphere on which the sunlight of heaven fell and was refracted in a thousand forms of prismatic beauty. Dante's hell was not more dreadful than was Bunyan's "Valley and Shadow of Death," with its pictured gloom and "its goblins damned." Nor was Milton's Paradise a more vivid type of heaven than was Bunyan's land of Beulah, his Delectable Hills, and his dim but glory-tipped pinnacles of the Celestial City.

Here and there, at long intervals, there is a mind of instinctive genius which would be spoiled by cultivation. Bunyan's, we think, was of this kind. The Saxon strength of his

language could not have found any help from either the Greek or the Latin. His rich and powerful imagination, which gave birth to the Pilgrim's Progress, would not have soared so sublimely into the very precincts of heaven, had its wings been bathed in the fountains of Helicôn instead of the purer waters of Siloam. But this example of genius without learning, and pulpit power without the training of the schools, is no reason for undervaluing learning or the schools wherein it is obtained. There has been but one Bunyan, as there has been but one Shakspeare. Such geniuses are like angels' visits. It would not do to wait for them—scarcely to wish for them. Differing from each other in glory, the stars, even the smallest, are all needed to illuminate the earth and beautify the heavens. Viewing Bunyan's origin, his conversion, his conflicts, his providential discipline, all conspiring to make him so admirable an instrument in God's hand for bringing out and establishing on an immovable basis the experimental philosophy of Christianity, we close by saying that the Christian world owes a debt of gratitude not only to the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, but to Him whose inspiration gave him so fine an understanding.



## REV. JAMES SAURIN.

IN 1685 Louis XIV., at the instigation of the Jesuits, revoked the edict of Nantes, by which act eighty thousand Protestants were driven into exile. "A thousand dreadful blows," says Mr. Saurin, "were struck at our afflicted churches before that which destroyed them; for our enemies, if I may use such an expression, not content with *seeing* our ruin, endeavored to *taste* it."

The Saurin family fled to Geneva, and there James, the eloquent preacher at the Hague, was educated. After trying military life for a while, he returned to Geneva, and under the tuition of some of the most celebrated masters, among whom were Pictet and Turretin, he completed his theological studies in 1700. He then visited Holland and England. In the latter kingdom he staid five years, preaching, with great acceptance, to his fellow-exiles in the city of London.

It required no small amount of self-denial for a young man of genius, of high family connections, driven from his native home by a



most relentless persecution, to enter the ministry, not knowing where to go nor what might befall him. But when the love of Christ moves the heart all considerations of expediency vanish, and the simple and sublime question of duty absorbs and governs the soul. In a brief notice of his consecration to the sacred office, given by the translator of his sermons, there is a just tribute to the lofty self-denial of the young preacher. "To dedicate one's self to the ministry in a wealthy, flourishing church, where rich benefices are every day becoming vacant, requires very little virtue, and sometimes only a strong propensity to vice; but to choose to be a minister in such a poor, banished, persecuted church as that of the French Protestants, argues a noble contempt of the world, and a supreme love to God and to the souls of men. These are the best testimonials, however, of a young minister, whose profession is not to enrich, but to save himself and them who hear him."

His preaching in London was characterized by great eloquence and power. The general population could not of course appreciate it, since it was addressed to his own countrymen, and in their own language. Remarking on his

dress and address, the writer before alluded to says, "The former was that of the French clergy, the gown and cassock; the latter was perfectly genteel, a happy compound of the affable and the grave—at an equal distance from rusticity and foppery. His voice was strong, clear, and harmonious, and he never lost the management of it. His style was pure, unaffected, and eloquent—sometimes plain, and sometimes flowery, but never improper; as it was always adapted to the audience for whose sake he spoke."

"An Italian acquaintance of mine," says the same writer, "who often heard him at the Hague, tells me that in the introduction of his sermons he used to deliver himself in a tone modest and low. In the body of the sermon, which was adapted to the understanding, he was plain, clear, and argumentative, pausing at the close of each period that he might discover, by the countenance and motions of his hearers, whether they were convinced by his reasoning. In his addresses to the wicked he was often sonorous, but oftener a weeping suppliant at their feet. In the one he sustained the authoritative dignity of his office, in the other he expressed his Master's and his own benevolence to bad men, praying them, in

Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. In general his preaching resembled a plentiful shower of dew, softly and imperceptibly insinuating itself into the minds of his numerous hearers, till the whole church was dissolved and all in tears under his sermons."

In 1705 he returned to Holland, and being invited by the French refugees who had settled at the Hague to become their pastor, he accepted the invitation, and continued his labors among them until he died. The Prince of Orange, who had here a spacious palace, allowed them the use of its chapel as their place of worship, where, every Sunday, Saurin's ministry was attended by a crowded and brilliant audience. Not only was he here listened to with the utmost attention and pleasure, but the effects of his ministerial labors were seen in the holy lives of great numbers of his people.

His interview with Queen Caroline, then Princess of Wales, is worth relating, not so much as a matter of condescension on the part of royalty as for the noble testimony which she bore to an all-governing Providence. In a levee, where many of the clergy were paying their respects to her royal highness, then on

her way to England, she singled out Mr. Saurin, and addressed him as follows: "Do not imagine that, being dazzled with the glory which this revolution seems to promise me, I have lost sight of that God from whom it proceeds. He hath been pleased to distinguish it with so many extraordinary marks, that I cannot mistake his divine hand; and as I consider this long train of favors as immediately coming from him, to him alone I consecrate them." The same royal lady wrote, requesting Saurin to prepare a treatise on the Education of Princes, which he did to her entire satisfaction.

At this distant date all the means we have for judging of the pulpit power of this eminent divine are the few hints already quoted, together with his published sermons. The latter extend through twelve volumes, and are regarded by ministers as among the sublimest discussions and illustrations of inspired truth. There is a simple grandeur in Saurin which we meet with nowhere else. More brilliant flashes of genius may be found in Jeremy Taylor, a more majestic march of sentences in Chalmers, a more compact and classic style in Hall, and bolder personifications in the impassioned Whitefield; but for the clear, onflowing

cūrent of thought that bears down every thing before it, none can exceed this master of pulpit eloquence. Like a river that rolls deep and impetuous until it loses itself in the vast ocean, his train of thought and reasoning, enlivened by occasional flashes of eloquence, ever tends to one grand issue—namely, the illustration of the divine majesty and glory in the wondrous work of redemption. We give a few brief extracts. He is on the insufficiency of earth to satisfy the soul's desires.

“Nature is too indigent. It may indeed afford us a temperate air, an earth enamelled with flowers, trees laden with fruits, and climates rich with delights; but all its present beauties are inadequate to the love of God; and there must be another world, another economy, a new heaven and a new earth. Our *faculties* are too indigent. They might indeed admit abundant pleasures; for we are capable of knowing, and God could gratify our desire of knowledge. We are capable of agreeable sensations, and God is able to give us objects proportionable to our sensations; but all these gratifications would be too little to express the love of God to us. Our faculties must be renewed, and in some sense new

cast; the natural body must become a spiritual body, so that by means of more delicate organs we may enjoy more exquisite pleasures. *Society* is too indigent; although society might become an ocean of pleasure to us. There are men whose friendships are full of charms, and God is able to place us among such amiable characters in this world; but society hath nothing great enough to express the love of God to us. We must be introduced to the society of glorified saints, and to thousands of angels and happy spirits, who are capable of more magnanimity and delicacy than all that we can imagine here. *Religion* itself is too indigent, although it might open to us a source of delight. Yet even religion can afford nothing here below that can sufficiently express the love of God to us. We must be admitted into that state in which there is neither temple nor sun, because God supplieth the place of both. We are to behold God, not surrounded with such a handful of people as this, but with thousand thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand, who stand continually before him. We must see God, not in the display of his grace in our churches, but in all the magnificence of his glory in heaven. From what

sources do those rivers of pleasure flow? It is *love* which lays up all this goodness for us.

“Let us meditate on the love of God, who, being supremely happy himself, communicateth perfect happiness to us. Supreme happiness doth not make God forget us; shall the miserable comforts of this life make us forget him? Our attachments to this life are so strong, the acquaintances we have contracted in this world so many, and the relations we bear so tender, we are, in a word, so habituated to live, that we need not wonder if it cost us a good deal to be willing to die. But this attachment to life which, when it proceeds only to a certain degree, is a sinless infirmity, becomes one of the most criminal dispositions when it exceeds its just limits. It is not right that the objects of divine love should lose sight of their chief good in a world where, after their best endeavors, there will be too many obstacles between them and God. It is not right that rational creatures, who have heard of the pure, extensive, and munificent love of God to them, should be destitute of the most ardent desires of a closer reunion to him than any that can be attained in this life. One single moment’s delay should give us pain;



and if we wish to *live*, it should be only to prepare to die."

Such thoughts as the above show that he who uttered them must have had his conversation in heaven, and must have known what it is to be "crucified to the world." It is spiritual eloquence. It is the echo of Paul's impatient but triumphant declaration, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." He speaks to us as from a higher atmosphere, saying, "Come up hither." Like the transfiguration scene, the glory and brightness are such that they ravish, while at the same time they confound us. Saurin's eloquence has much of the aroma of heaven. It seems laden with the balm of the tree of life, and regales the sympathies of the soul as odoriferous plants do the senses of the body. He is more of a Barnabas than a Boanerges. Love is the more natural atmosphere than terror, and his tears flow more frequently over man's misery, than do his threatenings over man's guilt. Profound and even sublime as are some of his discourses, yet the gentle element of love, like a transparent veil, is spread over all, giving a softened aspect to truths which might otherwise seem harsh or repulsive.



## JOHN BAPTIST MASSILLON.

IF Saurin may be regarded as a fine type of the Protestant clergy of France, Massillon, with equal justice, may represent the flower of the Papal ministry. As pulpit orators, it might be difficult to decide which of these eminent divines should bear the palm. Differing somewhat in their mental character, they yet possessed some traits in common. They were both extremely sensitive in their nervous structure. They were wholly absorbed in the duties of their profession. Both seemed oblivious of self, and intent only on the promotion of religion and the salvation of souls. They rose above the fear of man, and sought only to approve themselves in the sight of God. But Saurin was an exile, while Massillon was the court preacher, and for a time the admired of all admirers. Louis XIV. expelled Saurin from the kingdom, but sat down at the feet of Massillon, declaring, with truth no doubt, that "while other preachers made him think highly of *their* characters, Massillon sent him away dissatisfied with his *own*." What a pity that

his dissatisfaction never ripened into penitence! The convenient season with him, as with another tyrant, never seemed to arrive.

Massillon was of lowly origin. "The obscurity of his birth," says D'Alembert, "should be the first topic of his praise; and it may be said of him, as of that illustrious Roman who owed nothing to his ancestors: He was the son of himself alone." He entered, at the age of seventeen, into the oratory, to prepare himself for the high and sacred duties of the most noble of professions. It was soon evident to his teachers that his talents pointed him out as a great preacher, and they predicted for him a celebrity which his subsequent career not only realized, but exceeded. By nature excessively modest—by grace more than modest, truly and evangelically humble, he shrunk from the notoriety to which his brilliant talents necessarily exposed him. Alarmed at his own popularity, and feeling within himself the suggestions of vanity, he determined, as he said, "to escape from the demon of pride." Accordingly he buried himself in the abbey of Sept Fons, taking the habit and following out all the rigid austerities of the brethren of La Trappe.

A circumstance, seemingly fortuitous, called him out of this monkish solitude, and obliged him to return to the great theatre of Parisian life. The cardinal of Noailles, who had discovered this gem buried in the distant abbey, determined to bring it out and polish it for a higher destiny. He summoned Massillon to come to him, and placing him in the Seminary of St. Magloire at Paris, he exhorted him to cultivate pulpit eloquence. Ever obedient to his superiors, Massillon took this course. Here he perfected himself in the divine art, and when he resumed the pulpit, his very first sermons electrified the hearers and eclipsed all the most popular preachers of that day.

Massillon struck out for himself a new path. He determined not to preach according to the then reigning taste of the French pulpit. The preachers most popular and of the greatest celebrity, such as Bourdaloue and Bossuet, had dealt in sacred logic and profound research, giving food to the intellect, rather than feeling to the heart. Massillon determined at once to storm the citadel. He assumed that men needed to have the conscience roused, rather than the reason convinced; that their innate sense of religious obligation needed stirring to

a greater power of self-condemnation. In one word, that repentance, true sorrow for sin, was the first step in a religious life. He saw in all around him, from the monarch to the meanest of his subjects, the entire reign of pride and sensuality. What men needed was conviction of sin, conversion of heart. These emotions could be produced, not by appeals to the intellect, but by carrying the light of God's simple truth into the dark and disordered soul. He determined therefore to explore and analyze the motives, the passions, and the principles of human nature, and show how at variance they were with the law of God and the purity of the gospel. He determined also to draw men to the cross, and make them see that, while they might well despair of salvation in view of their own depraved character and conduct, yet, by faith in the great Sacrifice, there was hope for even the chief of sinners.

Such were the views of this great preacher, and in carrying them out, all Paris seemed to recognize their truth and their efficiency. Such was the plan of Massillon, and he executed it like one who had conceived it; that is, like a master. He excels in that part of

oratory which may stand instead of all the rest—that eloquence which goes right to the soul, but which agitates without confounding, appalls without crushing, penetrates without lacerating it. He goes to the bottom of the heart in search of those hidden folds in which the passions are enwrapped, those secret sophisms which they so artfully employ to blind and seduce us.

Dealing thus in the deep principles and passions which sway the universal heart, Massillon was listened to with interest by all classes. The rich and the poor, the nobility and the plebeian, all recognized his power, as from the sacred desk he showed them their corruption of heart and life, the obligation of repentance, and pointed out to them the cross, the only hope which God had set before them. It was this kind of preaching which called together such crowds, and which, delivered in tones of thrilling eloquence, not unmingled with tears, drew them at times from their seats, and obliged them to ask the great question, What must we do to be saved?

Preaching on the occasion of the death of the Dauphin, the introduction of his discourse was said to be the most impressive and affect-

ing ever heard on a similar occasion. The cathedral was hung in black and lighted dimly by tapers. At the foot of the high altar lay, enshrouded in funeral pomp, the smitten hope of the empire. The triumph of death could not have been more complete. Ascending the pulpit with solemn air, and surveying in silence the mortal remains of the Dauphin, he broke the awful stillness with these words: "There is none great but God." At the instant, the whole audience in tears arose and bowed towards the altar.

As court preacher, Massillon had a difficult and delicate task to perform. He must mingle respect with fidelity. Without flattering the vanity, he must rebuke the vices of royalty. With a due regard to forms, he must not withhold the stern mandates of Jehovah. Making allowance for human weakness and difference of position, he must deliver God's commands to the high as well as to the low. How he discharged this duty may be known by what D'Alembert has said of the exordium of his first discourse before Louis XIV., who was then in the zenith of his power and glory, and admired by all Europe, adored by his subjects, intoxicated with adulation and sati-

ated with homage. Massillon took for his text a passage of Scripture apparently least applicable to such a prince: "Blessed are they that mourn." "Sire," said he, "if the world were here speaking of your majesty, it would not address you with, Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed, would it say, the prince who never fought but to conquer; who has filled the universe with his name; who, in the course of a long and flourishing reign, has enjoyed with splendor all that men admire—the greatness of his conquests, the love of his people, the esteem of his enemies, the wisdom of his laws. But, sire, the gospel speaks not as the world speaks."

Massillon's manner was comparatively quiet, though intensely earnest and sympathetic. He made a few gestures, and usually spoke from memory. But his whole soul was deeply moved by the lofty sentiments or the faithful warnings which he uttered; and communicating his own emotions to his hearers, he wielded their passions at his will, awakening terrible convictions, or drawing from eyes unaccustomed to weep the tears of contrition. His whole air and manner, it is said, impressed the beholder with the idea of great personal holi-



ness, and prepared the way for that candid and courteous bearing which men never fail to give to the upright and the sincere. "His action," remarks D'Alembert, "was perfectly suited to his species of eloquence. On entering the pulpit, he appeared thoroughly penetrated with the truths he was about to utter. With eyes declined, a modest and collected air, animating the whole discourse with a voice of sensibility, he diffused over the audience the religious emotion which his own exterior proclaimed, and caused himself to be listened to with that profound silence by which eloquence is better praised than by the loudest applauses."

Modest and humble as Massillon was, oblivious of self, and seemingly almost unconscious wherein his great power as an orator consisted, yet his popularity drew upon him the usual venom of disappointed rivals. Efforts were made to cast a shade upon his character, to banish him from the metropolis, and to bury him in the obscurity of a distant bishopric. Unjust as this treatment was, he was not unwilling to retire from the glare and grandeur of Parisian life, and he found more real happiness in feeding his humble flock at Clermont, than in listening to the praises of congregated



thousands at Notre Dame. Never was there a parochial charge where greater wisdom and beneficence were exhibited on the part of the incumbent, or where greater reverence and gratitude were felt and manifested on the part of the parishioners. "His diocese," says his biographer, "preserves the remembrance of his deeds after thirty years, and his memory is daily honored with the most eloquent of funeral orations—those of the tears of a hundred thousand distressed objects. During his lifetime he had anticipated this testimony. When he appeared in the streets of Clermont, the people prostrated themselves before him, crying, 'Long live our father!'"

The sermons of this great pulpit orator are read even now with great delight. Deeper revelations of the human heart, or warmer expatiations on the love of God, can be found nowhere else. They literally glow with the combined radiance of piety and of genius. We feel their author's spirit as we read. Though transplanted from a warm and genial, because natural bed, to a colder and more rigid soil, yet do these floral beauties retain much of their gracefulness and their perfume. Massillon is an example of the power of emotional preach-

ing. He dealt, as we have said, with the *heart*. His reasonings were less to illustrate the *theory* than to enforce the *practice* of religion. He assumed that, while the judgment and conscience were on the side of God and duty, the selfish and sensual passions stood out against their claims. These he aimed to expose and batter down. And where is there a pulpit orator who had greater power in these respects? Let his example teach others. Instead of slow approaches to the resisting mind by processes of reasoning, let us carry the convictions of the understanding by first assailing the conscience and the heart. Easier far is it to bring over the judgment, after the affections are moved, than to move the affections by first convincing the understanding. Without carrying this idea to an extreme, we do think, if more would preach like Massillon, as to aim and object, even though not as eloquently hurling the arrows of truth directly at the heart, than like Barrow or Emmons commending religion by the beauty of its theory and the reasonableness of its claims, we should soon see a new and deeper impulse flowing from the pulpit, and a more tender and yielding acquiescence in those who sit beneath its teachings.

## MARTIN LUTHER.

IF Wickliffe was the morning star of the Reformation, Luther was its sun—full-orbed and glorious. No name stands higher on the heraldic legends of the past. The whole Protestant world pronounces it with reverence. Even his enemies concede his greatness, while they attempt to disparage his virtues. But Luther is known as a reformer rather than as a preacher; and even in the latter capacity we usually imagine him fulminating against the dogmas of Rome, rather than feeding the flock of Christ. But we do him injustice by associating him so entirely with the church militant. Never was there a more powerful preacher, never one more eloquent and persuasive. He was a natural orator. We remember a classical maxim, “*Poeta nascitur, orator fit;*” but we think the elements which constitute the true orator are as dependent on native genius as is the inspiration of the true poet. In both cases education may *improve*, but cannot *create* the character. There must be light and heat, knowledge and sensibility,



if no otherwise God help me Amen



or there can be no true oratory. The soul that kindles, the eye that flashes, the mind that seizes and grasps the thought, the speech that gives that thought its most forcible expression, these are the elements of oratory, secular or sacred, and these Luther had in an eminent degree.

“His parents,” says Melancthon, “took especial care in their daily instructions to educate their son in the knowledge and fear of God, and in a sense of his duty. The youth soon displayed great talents, and particularly an inclination to eloquence. With great ease he surpassed his school-fellows in copiousness of language, both in prose and verse; and if he had been so fortunate as to have met with suitable teachers, his great capacity would have enabled him to go through all the sciences.” His father intended him for the law, but Martin preferred the cloister. His deep religious feeling sought the congenial atmosphere of the monastic habit, and he chose the order of St. Augustine, as marked by a higher devotion and a more rigid self-denial than were found in some of the other monasteries.

Not satisfied with the dialectics of the

schools—Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas—Luther groped around the musty library at Erfurt until his hand fell upon an old Latin Bible. God had put it there expressly for *him*. His path had been dark, and his feet had stumbled. Here was a light unto his feet and a lamp unto his path. He seized the treasure, pressed it to his heart, and thenceforward became the champion of the Reformation.

But educated as Luther had been to absolute submission to the hierarchy, his first movement was simply to raise his own spiritual temper to the gospel standard. The instrument must be fitted for the work. Terrible conflicts with his own heart must precede the successful attacks upon papal corruptions. He must know in his own soul what was needed. The rotten foundation must give way under him. He must set his own feet firmly on the rock, before he can assail and demolish the vain subterfuges of popery. This experience he gained by a nearer contact with Rome, visiting the headquarters of corruption, and seeing with his own eyes the chambers of imagery. Here it was, ascending on his knees the "Scala Santa," he heard a voice from his Latin Bible saying, "This is not the way of

justification. 'The just shall live by faith.'" He trembled, and turned his eyes upon the cross. Having gained light, he returned to his home to diffuse it. He saw into the delusions by which the popular mind was deceived and the souls of the people destroyed. His war upon indulgences broke out more from hatred of error than from opposition to Rome. He was still a sincere Romanist, so far as papal authority and the decrees of councils were concerned; but when Rome undertook to endorse the mission of Tetzels, and by a necessary consequence to put down all who inveighed against the sale of indulgences, his spirit was stirred within him, as was Paul's in view of the Athenian idolatries. Thenceforward he took his stand against "the mother of abominations."

The career of this wonderful man has been by many competent and by some very eloquent writers minutely described. Indeed few there are who are ignorant of the events with which his name is associated. He was an acknowledged instrument of God in the great work assigned him. Unconscious in the preparation, he was so in the inception, the progress, and the completion. But the qualities of the man were essential to the prosecu-



tion of the work. With less iron vigor he would have fainted, with less courage he would have succumbed, with less conscientiousness he would have compromised. His frame and figure were almost leonine. His piercing eye, his voice, sweet when low, but when raised to high, impassioned utterances, breaking in thunder peals, gave one the idea of a sort of pulpit Jupiter. Maimbourg the Jesuit describes him as "possessing a quick and penetrating genius, remarkably strong and healthy, with a sanguine bilious temperament. His eyes were piercing and full of fire, his voice sweet but vehement when once fairly raised. He had a stern countenance, and though most intrepid and high spirited, he could assume the appearance of modesty and humility whenever he pleased, which, however, was not often the case." Varillas, a celebrated French historian, speaks of Luther as follows: "This Augustine monk united in his single person all the good and all the bad qualities of the hierarchy of his time. To robustness, health, and industry of a German, nature seems to have added the spirit and vivacity of an Italian. Nobody exceeded him in philosophy and scholastic theology, nobody equalled him in the

art of speaking. He was a most perfect master of eloquence. He had completely discovered where lay the strength or the weakness of the human mind, and accordingly he knew how to render his attacks successful. However various and discordant might be the passions of his audience, he could manage them to his own purposes, for he presently saw the ground on which they stood; and even if the subject was too difficult for much argument, he carried his point by popular illustration and the use of figures. In ordinary conversations he displayed the same power over the affections which he had so often demonstrated in the professional chair and the pulpit. No man, either of his own time or since, spoke or wrote the German language, or understood its niceties better than Luther. Often, when he had made his first impression by bold strokes of eloquence, or by a bewitching pleasantry of conversation, he completed his triumphs by the eloquence of his German style."

Such is the account of Luther by the enemies of the Reformation; and if to these concessions, there be added the usual aspersions on his character, we need not disbelieve the former, because we may reasonably suspect

the motives of the latter. From all that appears then, Luther was mighty in word as well as in deed. He possessed the elements of greatness, whether we regard his character simply, or what can hardly be separated from his character, his intellectual vigor, and his profound learning. In his mind there was an adaptation to the very genius of his native language. Bold, terse, expressive, simple, it needed for its highest development just such an intellect, combined with just such a high impassioned soul, and it never exhibited its gothic grandeur before or since on a more massive foundation.

We entirely mistake if we view Luther in the light simply of a great controvertist, assailing with ponderous logic the ramparts of the Romish hierarchy. True, he was from necessity pushed into the front rank, and became the rallying point of the great Protestant cause ; but he was, nevertheless, a man of the people. He excelled not more in silencing the proud advocates of the papacy than in his sway over the popular heart. If the one had reason to fear him, the other had no less reason to admire and love him. He was the man for the masses. Crowding the cathedrals where

he preached, they hung upon his lips in breathless silence, and received his appeals as the soldiers of an army receive the call of their favorite general to arms. Every man stood ready to follow Luther to victory or to the stake. Since the apostle Paul's day never had the cause of truth a more fearless or a more eloquent champion. His journey to Worms, where awaited him in state grandeur the emperor and Rome's haughty nuncio, was that of a conqueror rather than of a culprit. It was paved, every step of it, with popular benedictions. The people seemed almost ready to kiss the very ground on which he trod. And while at Worms, Luther was a sort of sovereign. His hotel was thronged with admiring crowds, and the whole heart of Germany pulsed with sympathy in his behalf. It would be hard to find in history a sublimer scene than was witnessed when the Augustine monk, with the banner of Frederick the Wise floating over his head, appeared in that Diet, to vindicate God's truth against the most subtle and powerful imposture that the world has ever seen. Thus it was when Paul in chains appeared before Agrippa and Felix, or when Huss stood up for Christ, with the flames of

martyrdom roaring in his ears. Here was the young emperor, canopied in crimson, with power to bind or to loose; and here were the representatives of Rome, vieing in grandeur with Charles himself, and overawing even *him* with the slumbering thunders of the Vatican. Here also were gathered the nobles of the empire, with sympathies for or against the accused, while crowds of the excited populace were thronging the avenues of the place, and awaiting in breathless anxiety the issue of the controversy. Luther was calm. God was his refuge and strength. He knew the ground on which he stood. He knew the weakness of his adversaries—weak, not in talents, but in the cause which they supported. We cannot omit a few sentences of his memorable speech. It shows the man. It was delivered first in German, afterwards in Latin. “I stand here in obedience to the commands of his most serene imperial majesty and the most illustrious princes, and I earnestly entreat them that they would deign to listen to this cause with clemency. It will appear, I trust, to be the cause of truth and justice; and therefore if, through ignorance, I should fail to give proper titles to each of the dignified personages who

hear me, or if in any other respect I should show myself defective in politeness, they will be pleased to accept my apology with candor. I have not been accustomed to the refinements of the court, but to the cloisters of the monastery; nor of myself have I any thing further to say, than that hitherto I have read lectures and composed books with that simplicity of mind which only regards the glory of God and the instruction of mankind."

Such are the introductory words of an address which consumed about two hours in the delivery. It produced an overwhelming impression. The papal legate turned pale under it. The pliant and politic Charles wrote out his verdict against it; but all Germany said Amen to it. It was the triumph of reason and of eloquence. The very foundations of Rome shook under it. Had not Frederick secured the promise of safe conduct to Luther, he would no doubt have been disposed of by the vengeful and mortified delegates of the hierarchy. But God was his refuge, and covered his head in the day of battle.

We have alluded to the scene at Worms partly to show Luther's power as an orator and his courage as a Christian hero. But it

would not be doing justice to this good man if we merged his qualities as a preacher in his celebrity as a reformer. "His heart," says Milner, "was not in these noisy and contentious scenes. Instruction of youth in divinity and preaching the gospel of Christ he considered as his proper business. He used to lament the peculiar infelicity of the age, by which he was obliged to waste in controversies so many hours that might have been better employed in guiding souls into the way of salvation."

This shows on what his heart was set. He loved the pulpit more than the controversial platform, and was happier in dispensing the word than in defeating his theological opponents. How beautifully he commences one of his sermons. It was on his return to his flock at Wittemburg. "My presence among my people is absolutely necessary. I must live with them; I must talk to them; I must hear them speak; I must guide them, and do them all the good I can. They are my children in Christ, and my conscience will not permit me to be absent from them any longer." Having made this apology to the Elector for his sudden departure from Wartburg, he begins his dis-



course as follows: "I am allowed to sound the gospel in your ears once more. By and by death will come, and then we can do one another no good. How necessary therefore is it, that every individual should be furnished with the principles which are to support him in that awful hour. These principles are the great doctrines of Christianity, and by treasuring them up in your memories, you will act like wise men, and be fortified against the attacks of the enemy." He then gives a condensed view of the great doctrines of the gospel, and concludes with these noble sentiments: "This same word of God has given such a blow to papal despotism as not one of the German princes—not even the emperor himself—could have done. It is not *I*; I repeat it, it is the divine word which has done every thing. Had it been right to aim at a reform by violence and tumults, it would have been easy for me to deluge Germany with blood. Nay, had I been in the least inclined to promote sedition, it was in my power when I was at Worms to endanger the safety of even the emperor himself. The devil smiles in secret when men pretend to support religion by seditious tumults; but he is cut to the heart when



he sees them, in faith and patience, rely on the written word."

How admirable are such sentiments, showing not only that Luther was the farthest from fanaticism, but that he was oblivious of self. His whole soul was swallowed up in the promotion of Christ's kingdom. To this sublime end he devoted all his talents, his zeal, and his learning. To accomplish it he hazarded his reputation and his life—confronting the imperial will and the indomitable hatred of Rome. He gave his days and nights to study, translating the whole Bible into German, and leaving it as the most precious legacy to his countrymen. He was especially the favorite of the people. His stormy, stirring, oftentimes overwhelming eloquence carried captive every heart, and made him the most beloved, as he was the most popular preacher in Germany. Like Peter in ardor, like Paul in zeal and learning, and like John in the overflowing affection of his Christian heart, he seemed to combine in his character the virtues of these great leaders of primitive Christianity. But we claim not for him the virtues without the weaknesses of those sainted men. We admit that he was irritable—as men of such strong

traits of character are apt to be—also perhaps that he indulged too much his propensity to humor; yet if no other delinquency can be charged upon him, we think that even his most virtuous censors can scarcely be justified in casting the first stone. For ourselves, we admire that sacred hilarity in Luther, lighting up the cloister, and shedding a radiance around the social conclave. With work such as he had to do, carrying in his troubled, anxious bosom a mountain weight of care and anxiety, it was merciful, as it was needful, that he should be endowed with the sunshine of a mirthful and buoyant spirit. Irritable! Who could have been composed when Herods were mocking and Pharisees were scorning, and even professed friends were calling upon him to save himself and let the truth go? We pardon his ebullitions, knowing that for the most part they were a sort of protest against cowardice and selfish cunning. But in Luther we discover, as the moral battle goes on, more faith and less human feeling, more calm confidence and less perturbation. At length we see the stormy passions subsiding into a gentle, childlike meekness and patience, that characterized him under the greatest bodily agony,

until death closed the scene and the suffering. He had fought the good fight, and finished his course. Farewell, brave soldier of the cross. The victories of truth over error, in which thou didst bear so conspicuous a part, are resounding on our harps still ; and far distant be the day when they shall cease to awaken our gratitude, or to employ our songs.

## THE APOSTLE PAUL.

To close the catalogue of eloquent divines with a venerated apostle may seem at first view like placing a ladder between earth and heaven. But we do not propose to bring down the inspired teacher to a level with the uninspired. We only wish to give the characteristics of that power *as a preacher*, which distinguished him even from his inspired colaborers; and which, together with his high moral qualities, render him for all time the great exemplar of the Christian ministry. In this view, we think Saint Paul ought to close and crown the honored list.

Though an inspired apostle, Paul's power as a preacher was intimately connected with the natural and cultivated qualities of his mind and heart. "In a great house, there are vessels of wood and of stone," which have their uses. "There are also vessels of gold and of silver," fitted for a higher ministration. Paul was one of the latter.

He was born and nursed in one of the most polished cities of the empire. Thence, at an

early age, he was sent to the metropolis of the Jews, where the schools of the prophets offered the best advantages for ecclesiastical culture. His master was the most renowned of the rabbins. At his feet he became versed in all the Hebrew lore which ages had accumulated, and in all the traditions which long centuries had transmitted. The scholar was worthy of the master. His original endowments were of the highest order, combining in one mind the varied attributes which are usually distributed among many.

The conversion of this eminent man was one of the great events in the early history of Christianity. Such a mind as his, such a temperament, such relations as he sustained to the Roman government and to the Jewish religion—his age, his energy, his indomitable spirit, all conspire to stamp his conversion as the great event of primitive times. Not only was that age interested and influenced, but all ages; not only the world as it then was, but the world now and for ever. Such an example lives. Such writings live. Such a spirit lives. They can never die—never.

The persecution which drove the disciples out of Jerusalem poured the light of the gospel

upon the isles of the Levant and upon the cities of Asia Minor. Antioch became the centre of Christian influence ; so that, if Judea was the birthplace of Christianity, Antioch may be called its cradle. Here the church entrenched itself under the labors of Paul and Barnabas. The sacred name of its founder was written on it indelibly. The disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch. We will not stop to inquire by whom this name was suggested ; whether by enemies as a term of reproach, or by friends as the highest title of honor ; but we hold in sweet remembrance a city where the banner bearing on it that glorious name was first unfurled, the sure pledge of strength to suffer and strength to conquer.

From this moral citadel Paul went forth on his first great mission as a preacher to the Gentiles. He plunged at once into the very centre of heathenish corruptions. He struck at "wickedness in high places." Cyprus, his first field, was famed for its sensuality and debauchery. Here the world-renowned goddess of beauty had her shrines, and living men were sacrificed annually to her imaginary charms. Hellish arts and incantations also were here practised. It was a bold stroke to put the gos-

pel into contact with such a population. But the Christian orator hesitated not; and see how he triumphed. Under his preaching the governor himself became a convert.

At Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, an event occurred which brought to view Paul's distinguished talents as a sacred orator. The inhabitants, witnessing a remarkable miracle wrought by the hands of the apostles, were impressed with the idea that the gods had come down to them in the shape of men. They accordingly proceeded to tender them divine honors. Barnabas they called Jupiter; but Paul, being the chief speaker, the orator of the occasion, they called Mercurius, or the god of eloquence. What higher compliment could have been given to Paul's oratorical powers?

This great preacher, after covering with his labors the principal cities of Asia, reached at length the port of Troas, and cast an eye across the *Ægean* sea to the shores of Europe. He heard from thence a call to come over and shed on the classic soil of Greece the light of the gospel. Her philosophers had taught her lessons of human wisdom. Her sculptors had filled her cities with temples and altars and statues, until the marble could be moulded into

no new forms of grandeur or of beauty. She had her poets, her warriors, and her sages. The tramp of her legions had made the earth to tremble; but she worshipped an "unknown God." That "unknown God" Paul longed to declare unto them, under the forms and doctrines of the gospel. Philippi and Corinth and Athens with all their grandeur lay buried in the midnight of superstition. To these proud cities, corrupt and licentious as they were proud, the humble preacher of the cross makes his way. He carries with him only one theme—the cross. All his eloquence is to take its inspiration from this. All his hope of success is centred *here*. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." This grand idea filled his soul, and made him fear no opposition and feel no solicitude.

In the cities of Philippi and Corinth, Thessalonica and Berea—indeed everywhere, was soon heard the note of gospel triumph rising above that of heathenish opposition. Persecuted the preacher was, but his appeals and reasonings found their way into the hearts of thousands, and churches sprung up to testify to the truth of his doctrine and to the convincing eloquence with which it was enforced.



Without derogating from the divine power which made Paul's preaching thus effective in the pulling down of these strong-holds of wickedness, we may assert that that power was not the less illustrious because operating through so fine a medium. God chooses his own instruments to do his own work. In this case, there was between the workman and the work a beautiful and admirable consistency. The shaft was polished by a divine hand before it was sped. The philosophy of the heathen sages was to be assailed, and it pleased God to commit the moral warfare to a well-drilled soldier. The popular superstition, enshrining itself in a thousand forms of artistic beauty—in temples, in altars, in statues—crowning every hill-top, haunting every stream and grove, obtruding itself even into the sacredness of domestic life: this superstition, having such deep foundations, was to be overthrown. The iconoclast must have not only a strong arm, but a heaven-inspired elocution. He must be a man who had studied the origin and the aim and the debasing qualities of this idolatry. Such was Paul; and in choosing him as the agent, under a divine inspiration, to accomplish this mighty work, God exalted his wis-

dom without the least detriment to the excellency of his power.

### PAUL AT ATHENS.

In order to a correct estimate of this great evangelist—to understand the qualities of his eloquence—it will be necessary to view him in certain positions where his speaking talents were called into conspicuous action. One of these occasions was on his first visit to the Grecian metropolis.

Persecution at Lystra and Berea obliged him to flee to Athens. Solitary and alone he enters this proud city. Everywhere the monuments of the fine arts courted his eye. They enfiladed every avenue; and the streets and squares were alive with the marble impersonations of their divinities. How do these things affect the preacher? Does he give himself up to the strong historic associations which would naturally invade a mind like his? He is now on the very spot where Socrates taught, Plato lectured, and Demosthenes thundered. The whole city is filled with the memorials of human genius. Turn which way he will, there is the chaste marble cut into almost living forms, or frowning up in fluted columns and porti-

cos, the fancied abodes of the gods. Everywhere the smoke of incense is rising to some tutelary deity. How is Paul affected by all this? It touches his heart more than his imagination. His spirit weeps. "Oh, ye deluded men," he seems to say, "would that I could give you my eyes, that you might see the vanity and sin of this soul-debasing worship."

But how shall he get access to these proud pagans? There is a forum there, where men meet to converse and to inquire after any new thing. Thither goes the preacher, and proclaims a new religion, wherein is revealed "the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."

The philosophers who have gathered around him know not what to make of these strange doctrines. They would have from him a more full and formal discourse. Paul accedes to their wishes, and from the famous Areopagus pronounces a sermon as sublime for its sentiments as it is chaste and beautiful in its style. Probably the outline only is given us. But with this outline before us, who would not have coveted a hearing of the whole grand discussion? To have seen that eye, with heaven's lustre beaming, the halo of inspiration

encircling and irradiating the whole man ; to have marked the wonder on those sage faces, as the great eternal realities were spread out before them ; to have seen one of their number more than interested, convicted, weeping as well as wondering—to have seen all this under the brow of the Acropolis, while Christ's blessed name was heard sounding along the porches and pillars of heathen temples, would have been an era in any man's life. It was one of the loftiest triumphs of eloquence. He spoke of the unity of God, in opposition to their "lords many and gods many ;" of the spirituality of God, in opposition to their materialism ; of the sin of idolatry ; of the duty of repentance ; of the resurrection and the judgment—themes as solemn as they were new to ears like theirs. No wonder Longinus, the great Grecian critic, though a pagan, places Paul's name among the most eloquent of that age.

#### AT EPHESUS.

Ephesus was a central dépôt of idolatry. Its magnificent temple, dedicated to "the great goddess Diana," was the resort of pilgrims from every quarter of the world. This was one of the high places where for ages spiritual wick-

edness had held control. It was a bold idea in a humble preacher of righteousness, to think of storming this city of idolatry. But that idea took possession of Paul. He opened his message first in the synagogue. Failing there, he advances his moral artillery to a more commanding position. For two years he preached in the school of one Tyrannus—independent ground—where Gentiles as well as Jews resorted to hear him. Here his success was great. By God's help he struck an effectual blow at idolatry. Thousands came forward and made confession of their hellish incantations. The professors of sorcery, smitten in their consciences, collected their books, and "burned them before all men"—an expensive bonfire, amounting in value, it is estimated, to over thirty thousand dollars.

Religion can never have its triumphs without its trials. Paul's powerful preaching, under God, had left the porches of Diana with but few worshippers. The whole city seemed about to forsake their idols for the worship of the true God. The sale of silver shrines had fallen off, and Demetrius the artificer, stung with the loss of his patrons, raised a conspiracy against Paul, under an assumed reverence

for the worship of Diana. This obliged Paul to leave Ephesus. But taking the whole circumstances into view, who can deny or even doubt that an eloquence which could storm effectively this strongest entrenchment of idolatry must have been of superhuman power?

#### AT JERUSALEM.

Paul's coming to Jerusalem had been anticipated. It was a great event. The fame of his eloquence and of his sufferings for Christ had preceded him. He enters Jerusalem a scarred veteran with the halo of victory around him. But the joy of his reception is not unattended with fear and solicitude. His enemies are on his track. The moment his presence is recognized, a storm of popular fury bursts upon him. He is dragged from the gates of the temple and given up to the mob. "Away with him," is the terrific cry.

At this juncture the Roman official, whose duty it was to keep the peace, interposes and rescues the victim. Thirsting for his blood, they pursue him to the castle. Amid all this uproar Paul is calm. He asks the privilege of addressing the people. It is granted. Halting at the foot of the stone steps, the soldiers

draw their swords and stand like a wall of adamant. High up on the terrace by the side of the chief captain is seen the preacher; bruised and bleeding, preparing to speak. Curiosity for the moment triumphs over passion, and they keep silence. So soon as that eloquent tongue is heard in their own sacred dialect, the silence grows still deeper. An admirable speech follows. In the first sentence is seen the skill of the orator seeking to propitiate an excited and prejudiced audience. Having gained their ear, he holds them in rapt attention. For a moment the eloquent speaker triumphed. But having in the course of his speech occasion to refer to the Gentiles, that hated word renewed the storm of malignant passions, and Paul was hurried to a place of safety. Was there not evidence here of eloquence of a high order?

#### BEFORE FELIX.

The outbreak at Jerusalem led to accusations which made it necessary to subject Paul to a trial before the civil tribunal. He was ready for it. Conscious integrity shrinks not from even the fiercest ordeal. Under an escort he is sent to Cesarea.



At the third hour of the night, issuing out of the gate of Jerusalem with muffled tread, were seen two hundred infantry, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, guarding one lone man of unsoldier-like appearance. These, heathen though they be, are God's guardian angels.

The escort delivers over the prisoner to Felix, together with an official statement by letter as to who he is and why he is sent. The reception is courteous, yet with imperial indifference. Paul is promised a hearing, and is then placed under custody.

He was now in charge of the Roman governor, and surrounded by legal bulwarks. Violence was of no use now. If they conquer him now, it must be after a fair encounter in open court. Rome had some good things to boast of; and one was, as Paul well knew, the sacred palladium of citizenship.

In solemn pomp the high-priest and the Sanhedrim, with their legal adviser, at length appear and present their charges. The formalities of the tribunal are arranged on a scale of grandeur commensurate with the occasion. By the command of Felix, the prisoner is brought forth. The Jewish barrister artfully



attempts to propitiate Felix by compliments as disgusting as they are inappropriate, and then turns upon the accused the venom-dipped tongue of falsehood. He aims at the outset to bring the apostle into contempt by calling him "a pestilent fellow," an artifice betraying not only the weakness of his cause, but the wickedness of his heart. "He is a mover of sedition" too. But here the difficulty was, first, that there was no proof of it; second, there was no truth in it. "He is moreover," adds Tertullus, "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes;" a charge savoring of truth, yet introduced in a way to imply something like a riotous and dishonorable leadership, than which nothing could be more unjust. But the principal charge, and that on which his enemies most relied for his condemnation, was the crime of sacrilege, or the profanation of the temple. If the charge could have been made out, Paul might have been executed.

When Tertullus had finished his artful harangue, there is applause among the Sanhedrim, and with one voice they exclaim, "Every word of it is true."

Now it is Paul's turn. He waits respectfully until the governor signifies that he may

speaking. He needs no Tertullus to plead for him. He can plead his own cause. Truth and innocence require no artificial rhetoric. He simply states the facts, and challenges his accusers to disprove them. It is done in a concise but masterly manner. His reply is calm, clear, and convincing.

Felix sees through the plot, and breaks up the court by saying that he will postpone the decision. Had he been a noble-minded Roman, a lover of truth and of justice, he would have knocked off Paul's chains and set him at liberty. But "the oppressor's contumely" sometimes subserves a purpose of God. He even had decreed that he should go up to Rome under the protection of Roman law. No thanks to Felix for this. His meanness and injustice in detaining an innocent man in prison for two whole years admit of no apology.

Felix was a bad man every way. He had a wife who did not lawfully belong to him. She was the wife really of another. Whatever her influence, being a Jewess, might have been in keeping Paul under duress, we know that a mean and mercenary motive influenced Felix. With such motives he sends for Paul to hear him concerning the faith in Christ.

Such a preacher and such an audience seldom meet. The pomp and glitter of a throne occupied by regal power; attendants numerous, and a guard mail-clad and magnificent: such an overpowering display would have intimidated any less exalted spirit than that of Paul. What was all this to him?

As he enters the place of hearing, loaded with chains, all eyes are upon him, those especially which looked down from the proconsular throne. The preacher knew his hearers. He had explored their character, and he knew what kind of truths they needed. Every sentence was like a flash of lightning, and every word was like one of the hail-stones of Revelation. It fell with startling emphasis upon the ears of the guilty.

Paul reasoned of "righteousness" to one of the most unrighteous men living. He preached "temperance" to one addicted to beastly sensuality; of "judgment to come" to a man whose crimes had already, in his own conscience, foreshadowed his doom.

No wonder Felix trembled. Such a sermon, by such a preacher to such a sinner, accounts for it. But it was only the conviction of the conscience, not the contrition of the pen-

itent. What an opportunity was there lost! Had Felix but improved it, even he might have found salvation.

#### BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA.

In the same grand halls of state, before the same throne, now occupied by the successor of Felix, the incarcerated preacher is permitted again to vindicate his innocence and to explain his doctrine. The two weary years of his captivity had rolled away, and there was some hope now that he might be set at liberty. But that hope died so soon as Paul understood the temper of Festus leaning evidently towards his accusers. Hence his appeal to Cæsar. This was his right as a Roman citizen, and now was the critical moment to exercise it.

For good and sufficient reasons, Paul would not consent to have the second trial take place at Jerusalem. The governor insisting, Paul replies, "If I have been an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar." In the face of Festus, this was bold. But it settled the matter for the present.

Meanwhile another regal character comes into view—Agrippa. He comes to salute the new proconsul. Festus is glad of his arrival, for he can consult with him concerning Paul. Agrippa hails the opportunity to hear a man so noted for his eloquent advocacy of the Christian faith. Accordingly great preparations are made for the hearing. A magnificent assembly is convened. The whole thing is on a scale of imperial grandeur. Agrippa with Bernice gorgeously arrayed enter the hall, and seat themselves on the judgment-seat beside Festus. All the principal men of the city are there, together with an imposing array of military shining in their imperial panoply.

At the command of Festus, Paul is sent for. The assembly is hushed, and every eye is turned in one direction as the clank of chains is heard in the corridor. A man of moderate stature enters, of a wan countenance furrowed with care and thought, his hands folded across his breast, in order to support the weight of fetters with which they are encumbered. Preceded by the centurion, he moves slowly into the centre of that vast assembly. His eye is not dazzled nor his heart intimidated by this

imposing spectacle. One who has had a vision of God and angels, whose daily converse is with the King of kings, thinks but lightly of the trappings of royalty. Yet with a respectful and courteous manner does he bow towards the throne.

Festus introduces the matter, going over the principal facts, and declaring that one object of the present occasion was that, in connection with the opinion of his royal guests, he might have something more definite to state in his letter to Augustus. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself."

The speech that followed, so familiar to all, is a model of earnest and eloquent address, rising as it proceeds, until it thrills every hearer, and starts Festus from his throne, exclaiming, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

"I am not mad, most noble Festus," is the courteous reply; "but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. King Agrippa knoweth of these things, before whom I also speak freely." Then turning to Agrippa, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" A pause. "I know that thou believest."

The appeal has touched Agrippa's heart. In a voice tremulous with emotion he cries out, regardless of the proprieties, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Seizing this concession, the orator, lifting up his hands burdened with a weight of chains, and with an eye upturned to heaven, and as if addressing both God and man in the same breath, exclaims, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

It is useless to say what we think of this strain of Pauline eloquence. Should we put it on a par with that of Demosthenes, we might be accused perhaps of official partiality. But judging of its power by its effects, we should say that few speakers on record can surpass this. It brought Festus to his feet, and made Agrippa almost a Christian.

#### PAUL'S ELOQUENCE JUDGED OF BY HIS WRITINGS.

We judge of the eloquence of uninspired preachers in part by their published sermons. The same rule might not perhaps apply to the inspired preacher. His hand is held, as it



were, by the hand of God. What he writes is, in a sense, the eloquence of the overshadowing Spirit. To appreciate the efforts of human genius, requires a sympathizing genius in the reader. So, to have a right and full impression of an inspired composition, the eye of the reader should have caught some of the radiance that touched the soul of the writer. Still we must allow that inspiration destroys not the stamp of individuality which marks the sacred writers. Each has his own peculiar style easily distinguishable; so that, were Paul's name or John's not appended to his epistles, it would be no very difficult task to identify the respective authors.

Take the Epistle to the Romans as an exponent of the intellectual character of its author. It is a great discourse on great themes. In it may be found every attribute of an admirable if not perfect style; while as a whole it resembles a finished piece of architecture, strong, symmetrical, and graceful. The oration of Demosthenes on the crown is not a more sure index of the genius of its author, than is this sublime epistle of the eloquence of St. Paul.

Many circumstances conspired to carry up



this composition to so unequalled an elevation. His soul was filled with the inspiration of God. The place and people wrought mightily upon him. It was to go to *Rome*, that peerless city, the centre of power and influence, where science and art had reached a perfection hitherto unknown. It was to a church composed in part of the élite of Rome's citizens. All these things combined to make this epistle a production of great force and eloquence. In it the author's power as a logician comes into view. He reasons abstractly and also on admitted facts. Sometimes the stream of argument flows on clear and calm, and then breaking into the abruptness of the Socratic mode, makes its way with the force of a cataract. His aim is to drive the Jew from forms to faith in Christ, and to shut up the Gentile to the same faith. He closes up every avenue to heaven but one. To that one he points continually, saying, There, where the cross is seen, where the atoning blood is seen, *there only* is the road.

As he proceeds, his soul, by its own impetuosity, takes fire, and he actually glows amid his own radiance. You see the flashes of feeling mingling with the forms of logic. When his reasoning reaches the cross, that great cen-

tral point of interest, as it does from whatsoever point he starts, it loses itself in rapturous emotion. As his eye catches a view of that cross, it kindles, it weeps. Every thing is instantly in a glow. He forgets to reason. He cries out in passionate sorrow at man's dull understanding, or breaks forth in seraphic devotion, as if he saw the Son of man in his glory. Thus, from beginning to end, we challenge a comparison in behalf of this production with any writings, ancient or modern, whether they be treatises on the worship of God or on the virtues of man.

Paul's character as a preacher is intimately connected with his style and manner as a writer. It is impossible to read his epistles without forming some idea of him as a preacher. We thus approach at least some just impression of his sacred oratory.

And yet Paul himself has, in one of his epistles, intimated that the Corinthians objected to his preaching, while they admired his writings. It should be remembered, however, that, according to the standard of taste which prevailed at Corinth—formed on the most perfect models of the Grecian schools—where compass of voice and grace of gesture and the pol-

ish of periods entered largely into their estimate of oratory, Paul would not be rated among the very first. He went unto them, not "with excellency of speech;" that is, not studying to reach the high classic finish of the Attic school. Nor was he careful probably to cultivate or exhibit much gracefulness of manner. He was mainly anxious to find his way to their hearts and consciences; and hence they spoke sneeringly of his address. But that Paul was not a powerful preacher, that he was not eloquent in the best sense of the art—meaning by eloquence power to convince the judgment, rouse the sensibilities, and touch the heart—that in all these respects he was not the eloquent preacher, no man can make us believe. The power, by a few sentences, to still an infuriate mob, to shake a tyrant on his throne, and compel another to start from his seat in convulsive agony, while a third is ready almost to give up heathenism for Christianity—such a power is indicative not only of inspired energy, but of sublime eloquence.

And now let us ask, Wherein resided this power? Undoubtedly in the divinely wrought character of the man. It was one of unequalled purity. Self was sacrificed to the glory of

God and the good of man. The Old Testament, together with all the collateral history, was stereotyped upon his memory. He was versed also in Grecian learning. To this must be added a keen insight and thorough knowledge of mankind. Thus furnished, and with a wisdom that could most effectively bring that knowledge to bear, he was on all occasions perfect master of his subject. He was calm and self-possessed. This arose from his indifference to the opinions of the world, and his entire absorption in the great matter on hand. His reputation he had laid down at the foot of the cross. Life and death were not with him the great questions, but truth and duty. Hence there was neither perturbation nor failure. Such was this inspired preacher as he went forth with that one great idea, "Christ, and him crucified," burnt into his very soul.

The leading trait of his character was *action*. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do*?" The impulse, the ability, and the will to do, were all his. The same unyielding, indomitable energy characterized him both before and after his conversion. But in the latter case it was raised to a pitch of grandeur from the nature of the enterprise to which it was conse-

crated. The current of his soul's affections setting in this new and heaven-directed channel, pressed onward with an impetuosity that swept every thing before it. His life was "a living sacrifice." With this energy was combined a sublime unity of purpose; so that, in his own expressive words, "To him to live was Christ."

Paul's religious life had depth as well as height. The structure that rose so high, so near to heaven, could never have stood the shocks which it received, had it not been imbedded deep in the soul, resting on "the Rock of ages." His religion blended itself with all his forms of thought, with all his affections, with all his deportment, putting on him a grace and polish, a celestial refinement even, which is as superior to mere human culture as the natural flower, with its beauty and its fragrance, is to the tawdry and inodorous artificial one.

But Paul was one of whom the world was not worthy; and so heaven, long waiting for his coming, at length claimed him as her own. The seat in glory—a high one—was ready for him. And now "Paul the aged," worn out with labors and sufferings, scarred from head

to foot in the battles which he had fought for truth and holiness, surrenders himself to the tyrant, enters the dungeon, and awaits the signal for martyrdom. By that dungeon's dim light, within hearing perhaps of the roar of the half-starved lions of the amphitheatre, he dictated his dying message: "I am now ready to be offered; and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me in that day."

Can any thing be added to this? Can we ask for any thing more? A more glorious life and a more glorious close of life have never been witnessed among mortals. Here the curtain drops. The last scene is the dungeon; the last words, the triumphant ones just quoted. The rest is left to our imaginations. The road from that dungeon to the amphitheatre was short. He trod it, we doubt not, with a firm step, a fearless, yea, even an exultant heart. He was in sight of the goal and of the crown. One momentary pang put him in possession.

But such a man never dies. We do not look upon him as dead. He lives in his epis-

bles, in his example, in his spirit. The death-scene seems to have been shrouded from us purposely, that we may think less of the mortal and more of the immortal man. By the grace of God he reached his peerless elevation. But we can discern his foot-prints and see the direction in which they tend. We can catch a glimpse of him in the high up and far distant flight. Where he fixed his eye, we may fix ours. "I press towards the mark." That mark was Christ; to win whom and to be found in whom was, to St. Paul, worth a life-long struggle, and more than compensated for all the terrors of martyrdom.







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